7.24.14.

Library of the Theological Seminary,

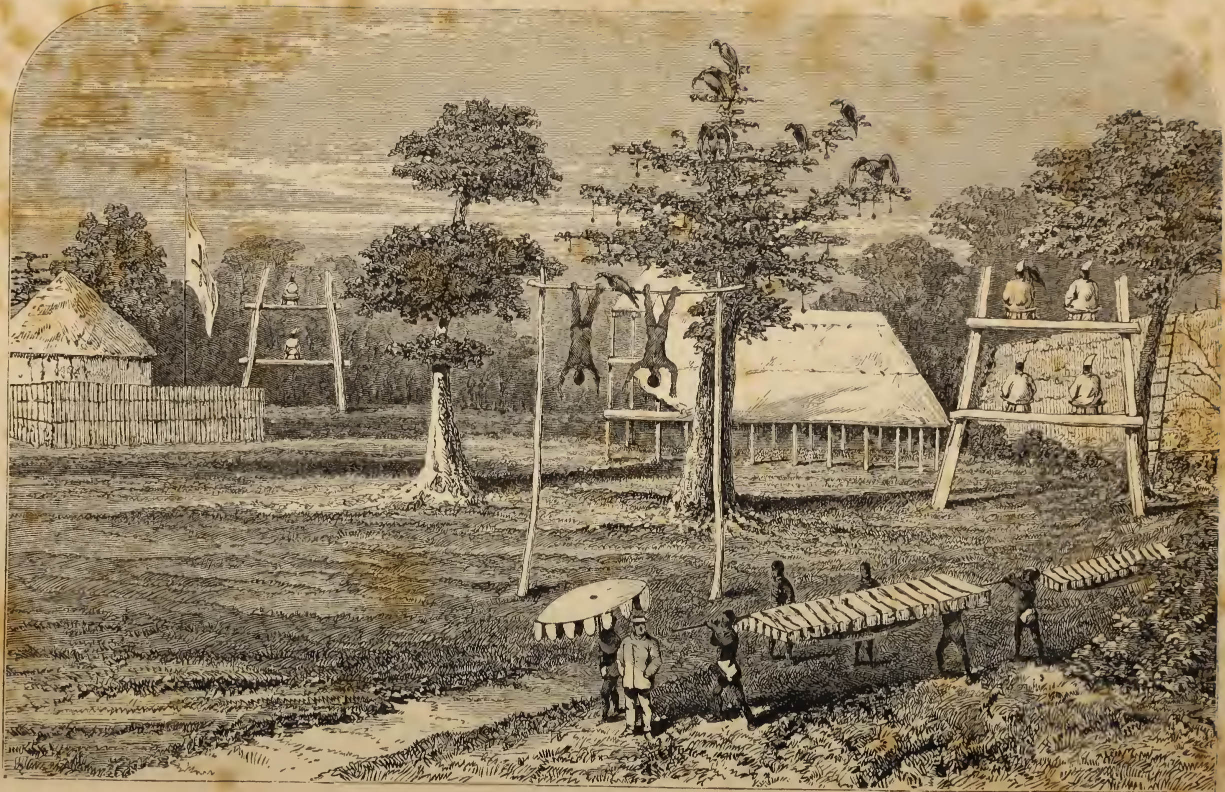
PRINCETON, N. J.

Purchased by the Mary Cheves Dulles Fund.

Division DT541

Section B97

v. 2



THE KING'S VICTIMS.

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
JUL 24 1914
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A
MISSION TO GELELE,
KING OF DAHOME.

WITH NOTICES OF

THE SO CALLED "AMAZONS," THE GRAND CUSTOMS, THE
YEARLY CUSTOMS, THE HUMAN SACRIFICES, THE
PRESENT STATE OF THE SLAVE TRADE,
AND
THE NEGRO'S PLACE IN NATURE.

BY

RICHARD F. BURTON,

(LATE COMMISSIONER TO DAHOME,)
AUTHOR OF "A PILGRIMAGE TO EL MEDINAH AND MECCAH."

> "If a man be ambitious to improve in knowledge and wisdom, he should travel into foreign countries"—PHILOSTRATUS IN APOLL.

> "Every kingdom, every province, should have its own monographer."
> GILBERT WHITE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.
1864.

[*The Right of Translation and Reproduction reserved.*]

LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XIV.—(*Continued.*)

PAGE
The King's "So-sin Custom" 1

CHAPTER XV.

Of the so-called Amazons and the Dahoman Army . . 63

CHAPTER XVI.

Addo-kpon, the Bush King's So-sin Customs . . . 86

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the Dahoman Religion 133

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Sin-kwain, or Water-sprinkling Custom . . . 167

CHAPTER XIX.

Of "The Negro's Place in Nature" 177

CHAPTER XX.

The Day of Triumph 216

CHAPTER XXI.

PAGE
Dahome and her Capital 230

CHAPTER XXII.

The Firing to Whydah, and Conclusion of the Customs 253

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Delivery of the Message 270

CHAPTER XXIV.

Return to the Seaboard 290

CONCLUSION 307

APPENDICES 321

A MISSION TO GELELE,

KING OF DAHOME.

CHAPTER XIV.—(*Continued*).

SECTION C.

The Bonu-gan nun Kpon 'gbe dié,[*] *or Third Day of the King's Customs.*

At half-past 3 P.M., on the last day of 1863, we hammocked to our former place before the south-eastern or Komasi Gate, and found the *séance* much as it was before. On this occasion, however, besides the standing dish of three royal skulls, there were on the King's proper left, eleven "neptunes," or broad shallow brass pans of Abeokutan crania, nine or ten to each.[†] A dozen men were capering before royalty; when they had ceased, knelt, and shovelled, eight others performed the "Ganchya" dance, in which the hands are washed in imperceptible water, or rubbed like a draper's assistant.

---

[*] Bonu-gan (civilian captains, or ministers), nun (thing), kpon (look), 'gbe (to-day), dié (this).

[†] The calabashes full of skulls are called men-ta-doka-men.

Within the bamboos women passed before the throne from left to right, bowed to Gezo's ghost, and after prostrating to the King presented arms. First came a procession of eighteen Tansi-no, or fetish women, who have charge of the last monarch's grave,*—slow and solemn old gipsies, in gold-trimmed broad-brim felts or white nightcaps. They were preceded by bundles of matting, eight large stools, calabashes, pipes, baskets of water, grog, and meat, with segments of gourd above and below, tobacco bags, and similar commissariat articles; and they were followed by a band of horns and rattles. Eight stools, or chiefs with their attendant "Amazons," and young female slaves of the palace, made obeisance, whilst armed women sang dirges in the minor key, clapped hands, and presented arms. Followed a dance of six Amazons to a very weak band.

---

* The Dahomans, like other Yorubans, and the people of the Gold Coast, bury in the house, choosing a room which is afterwards kept locked. So Alexander ab Alexandro informs us that, before the Laws of the Twelve Tables, the Romans interred corpses in their habitations, using as coffins large casks and other vessels—whence arose the *lares*, or ancestral ghosts.

Gezo, I am told, is inhumed at the Komasi Palace in a small room under a temporary thatch and matting shed, which will be replaced with swish when there is blood enough to make it.

According to some authorities, the Tansi-no are all women, and descendants of kings, who attend upon the royal graves, whilst these broad-brimmed personages are called Bassaji, great fetish women representing the ghosts of former monarchs.

Presently two messenger-women came from the right end of the square, ushering twenty-one umbrellas—of which two were coloured, and the rest white—divided into three parties, accompanied by the usual band and canteen. The chief was the she-Min-gan, whose back was all pig-tails depending from the score of coral and metal necklaces with which she had been decorated. Joined by the Adanejan's "mother," a middle-aged officeress, stout as the most "bulbous" Englishwoman, and round in every part where curves should be, she performed a knife dance. The pair then took muskets and skirmished, whilst the others formed up and pranced before the King. Finally, the Min-ganess disposed herself opposite the throne, upon the knobs of two war sticks stuck in the ground—it was Britannia sitting as she does in pence on the edge of her shield.

The King then rose and walked forward to throw cowries, the local money, amongst his subjects. All removed their ornaments and girt their loins; it is a point of honour to fight for the royal bakhshish, and nob and snob join in the melée. No notice is taken if a man be killed or maimed in the affair; he has fallen honourably fighting for his sovereign. Some lose eyes and noses; the Dahomans gouge like Lancashire "purrers" or Sœstudalian peasants, bite like hyenas—I have seen a hand through which teeth met—and scratch like fisherwomen or cat-o'-mountains. We speedily withdrew our chairs. The King, habited in a toga of tender green, came forward to the bamboos, and stood as *agonistarch* under his umbrellas and parasol, which were upheld by nine women and two very small girls. He took from baskets, which were brought up in turn to him, heads of strung cowries, and tossed them high up to the crowd, who fought for them as if they were gold. The bundles were torn to pieces in a moment, so were the strings, and at times there was a scramble, a bite, and a scream about a single shell.*

The King, surrounded by his guard, then perambulated the square by west and south, still throwing strings of cowries; from where we stood the dust-blurred mass of fighting negrohood looked like the dæmons of some mediæval picture, or the dreams of Father Pinamonti. When royalty had returned to the bamboo, we were summoned to "fight for cowries," and not being in uniform we scrambled like school-boys, omitting however the Dahoman adjuncts. When our attendants and the Moslem deputation had received their share, we regained our old places. The palace gate was thrown open, and through it we saw the women all hustling one another as the men had done.

---

* A head of cowries (= 2 shillings) keeps a poor man for about four days, or 9*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* per annum. An officer expends about 75*l.* per annum, which is the rate of living of a Moslem gentleman and his household in Syria.

The chief of the hunchbacks,* Lizi-dogo-bo-je'gbwo-to-men,† wielding, with arms like Rob Roy's, a circinal-edged hide-whip, and assisted by his attendants, soon cut a way through the crowd. After "Lizzy's" performance appeared a body of fetishers in three parties, headed by Boro and Zenhwe, their captains. The first seven carried on their heads each an ugly "wee wudden goddity," supposed to walk by itself after nightfall.

---

* The "Gobbo" is here an institution. These deformities, which are very common, contrary to the case of Africa generally, are of both sexes and of all ages. We repeatedly saw troops of little she hunchbacks.

† Lizi is his proper name. Dògò (the "languti" of India, which we generally translate T-bandage), bo (and), je (falls into), Agbwe-to (a certain sea-fetish, here used for "the sea,") men (in). The meaning is, "In his indispensables he falls into the sea," that is to say, "He is brave and fears nothing."

These "Bo" are dwarfish attempts at humanity, male and female—the sexes made very distinct—lamp black and red, with white caps and pagnes.* The second party, consisting of ten men, bore in their hands as many iron fetish sticks, from 4 feet to 6 feet long, capped mostly with a barred cone like a modern Moslem cresset, apex downwards, and topped with rude iron imitations of land tortoises. The third party, also ten in number, was the band.

Having danced with much effusion and paraded their godlings, the fetishers defiled to the right and vanished from the crowd. The King then walked up to the victim shed, and paced down its length within the railing. To the score of wretches there sitting pilloried he threw with two hands as many heads of cowries, and these were placed by the attendants upon the caps of the recipients. He conversed freely with several of them. The others, though I could see no sign, were probably gagged, for the reason before stated. He then came up and snapped fingers with me, when a hint was given that at my intercession several victims would be pardoned. This also is a Dahoman formula. I pleaded for them, saying that mercy is the great prerogative of kings, when nearly half of them were brought up before Gelele, were untied, and were placed by their keepers on all fours to hear the royal clemency.

---

* The first was a blue dwarf, in a grey pagne, with hat on head; the second, a blue woman, with protuberant breasts; the third, a red dwarf with white eyes, clad cap-à-pié, in red and brown; the fourth was a small black mother and child in a blue loin-cloth, with a basket or calabash on the former's head; the fifth, ditto, but lesser; the sixth, was a pigmy baboon-like thing, with red face under a white skull cap, a war club in the right hand and a gun in the left; and the seventh much resembled the latter, but was lamp black, with a white apron behind. They were carved much as the face cut on the top of a stick by the country bumpkin in England.

An "Ago!" and a ting! tang! caused a deep hush, and the Min-gan, whose beard and hair were brick-red with dust, uttered a long, dreary, drowsy speech, much reminding me of a certain "Great Eltchi." The substance was, that the chief of a tributary town, Izatakuno, having sent instead of cowries palm kernels to the King, he, the Min-gan, ashamed to report such an outrage, had captured the prisoners exposed at the palace shed. The high officer again powdered his hair and reclined on one arm, whilst the King informed him that the proceeding was duly approved of, and that the pardoned rebels must be speedily removed from his sight. His right royal speech was followed by an uproar of cymbals, the usual two decanters of rum were sent to us, and thus we got "pass," or permission to leave "the presence."

That night was our "watch night," which the hammock men kept for us with potations pottle deep of trade spirits.

SECTION D.

The So-nan-wen-kan 'gbe,[*] or Fourth Day of the King's Customs.

The first day of the new year (1864) was chosen for the ceremony of loosing horses, which is not usually performed till a fortnight after the opening of the Customs. Mr. Cruikshank was feverish : the labour of pleasure in Dahome is somewhat hard ; I therefore went alone to the usual place, and found there a new hat. It belonged to a dark youth, M. Joaquim de Cirqueira Lima. He had been brought up at Berlin, and there had attracted considerable notice. Presently returning to Africa, he became head clerk to the

---

[*] So (horse), nan-wen (will break), kan (rope), 'gbe (to-day). As I have said, the horses had been returned, but this is probably the old name of the fête-day.

Hamburg factory at Lagos ; and at the death of his father, the headman of Brazilian emigrants, who had received an umbrella from the King, he had gravitated to the quality of "Whydah gentleman." All the chief caboceers were sitting in poor clothes under old blackened and war-soiled umbrellas, which will be laid aside to-morrow. There was a suspicious gathering of vultures on the tree under which our chairs were disposed. Can their sagacity extend to guessing that death is near ?

Seven men were prancing before the King, whose brother Anlinwanun substituted for them an untired troop. After their obeisances and salutations, the bamboo barrier was enlarged for the Amazon dances. A peloton of fifty wives and fighteresses, several of them "half-heads" and others with a haircrest along the poll-ridge, stood up : then, turning towards the tent where Gezo's ghost was, they capered and they sang in chorus and in solo to the Amazon band on the left of the throne, lauds of the old king. After that performance fourteen of the tallest and most swaggering, not including a small girl, formed line, and two mistresses of the ceremonies, armed with horsetail chauris, chanted and sometimes pranced to give time in rear. The toilette was the pink of propriety,—a vest, a pagne, a shorter undergarb and Ffon chokoto or "pantilettes," longer than the male article, and extending to the knees : it is a provision which might be naturalised in all countries where *caleçons* are not *de rigueur*. When the time was to be changed, one or both of the Blue Companies advanced towards the band with pin toes straight in front, ungracefully throwing out first one arm then the other, with one or two fingers extended, and clapping palms on the thighs or on something fleshier. Thus the measure was taken up by a single cymbal, and finally by the full band. The dancers stamped, wriggled, kicked the dust with one foot, sang, shuffled, and wrung their hands—there is ever a suspicion of beheading in these performances—bending almost double, ducking heads, moving sideways to right and left, fronting and facing everywhere, especially presenting the back, converting forefingers into *strigils*, working the arms as in Mediterranean swimming, and ending in a *prestissimo* and very violent movement of the shoulders, hips, and loins. Then whilst the rest reposed on short stools there was a grand *pas de deux*. The whole merits of the ballet were time and unison : nothing could be less graceful or more deficient in the poetry of motion. All ended with kneeling, bending heads to the ground, and rubbing palms.

Thereupon Adan-men-nun-kon of the guard, supported by a three-deep column of fifty men, stood up, and, in the bawling barking tone affected by the real brave, declared that as the Fanti Company had sung about breaking Abeokuta, so the Blue had sworn to destroy it. The sentiment was seconded by the Gau and the Matro with such jumping and breast beating that a stranger would suppose them to be in a violent rage. The general uproar of captains, the dance, and presenting arms, sticks and knives, testified their general joy, and they chanted to the effect that they would not only knock down the walls of Abeokuta, but they would also carry away the bits for Gelele their king. It reminded me of the Southern heroes who carried Mr. President Lincoln's coffin, and were "bound" to bring him back in it, and have not done so.

The women having re-formed a single peloton five deep, Ji-bi-whe-ton, their coloneless, issued from the midst of them; her scalp was clean shaven and shining, a single little lock held a silver knob like the finial of a tea-pot, and her chief ornament was the common *fleur-de-lis* of silver attached by a chain to her neck. She wore a vest, pink before and white behind, with a drooping slovenly collar : a black leather cartridge-belt kept in position her long blue striped waist-cloth and confined on her left hip an ammunition bag, whilst her right hand grasped the muzzle of a short musket, to which were hung many charms. In hoarse manly tones she called out severally her best women, each of whom sharply responded "Tamulé ! O Brave !" presented them to the King, handed to them their cowries, placed the bundles upon their heads, and dismissed them. Some of the more forward made short speeches with a pert air, and struck their bosoms as to say "I am the woman to do it,—I." At times a dozen or so stood up, sang and raised one or both arms, the forefinger as usual being extended, thus swearing to brave deeds before the King.

Similarly Adan-men-nun-kon presented his chosen warriors, who, unlike the women, prostrated themselves. At one name, Mocho,* the captainesses laughed satirically, showing the rivalry ever existing between the two sexes. The women, naturally somewhat in-continent of tongue, also supply all omissions and explanations of the men's speeches, whilst these dare not interrupt their sister soldiers. On the other hand the full private, the jester, the bush-man, in fact every one, addresses his sovereign without interruption, demanding and receiving audience and justice. So far the despotism is quite *en règle;* it is the progressive democratic, not the barbarous aristocratic. Lastly, there was a general "Tamulé!" the women sang and clapped hands, whilst the *élite* danced. This example was duly followed by the men.

---

* If a man "get Afa" (Chapter XII), before the births of his children, the first boy is called Amoso, and the girl Alugba ; the next are named Mocho and Alugba-hwe, and so on.

Silence having been once more proclaimed, the King spoke fiercely about the capture of Abeokuta, and he was seconded by Adan-men-nun-kon the Brave. The women fired, the men blew their horns, and both companies, masculine and feminine, sang to this purport: "We refused to let our king furnish his father's grave with any skulls and bones save those of the Egbas. These we swear now to procure for him. If the foe soar in the air we will fly, if he dive we will follow him, if he sink in earth we will descend after him." The King excitedly informed them that he would see the oath kept. The Blues rushed tumultuously afar, skirmishing and firing: presently they returned at a *pas de charge*, and clustered before the King, whilst the women chanted Nago songs, in which they are said to excel.

After the heralds had cried "Oyez!" the King ordered them to sing again, when they recited the past prowess of the two principal companies. Once more Gelele, with violent gestures and wildly tossing his arms, declared that he must go and break Abeokuta. Two baskets of cowries were brought out, the Amazons carried off their share, and an old messenger woman bore the other to the men, who after prostration loaded it upon their shoulders.

The King made a third warlike speech, to the effect that dirty cloth must be washed, and that his honour must be redeemed by destroying Abeokuta. The women sang, both sexes presented arms, and jesters blew loud blasts with their tusk-horns. Again the Amazons chanted to the funereal tinkle of a single cymbal, succeeded by a full band. After sundry dances, all sat down, touched with their foreheads the ground opposite the old King's tent, and then saluted, with the usual three *batta-palmas*, his royal son. Wearing many silver studs in a Turkish cap-like mop of hair, fifteen princesses, mostly daughters of

Gelele, and wives of the Adanejan and other officers, issued from the palace, and knelt in two lines close to the throne. On the Meu's side appeared the seven Bo images mentioned yesterday, preceded by two fetisheers in peculiar dress. A So* was brought up to us, a bull-face mask, of natural size, painted black, with glaring eyes and peep-holes, the horns were hung with red and white rag strips, and beneath was a dress of bamboo fibre covering the feet and ruddy at the ends. It danced with head on one side, and swayed itself about to the great amusement of the people.

Presently our chairs were hastily removed, and we retired to the eastern shed, whilst the natives, flying in confusion, occupied the southern side of the square. Women dressed in every shade of colour came streaming from the palace, and turned to the right; so that, on passing the King, they presented as usual the dexter shoulder. They were preceded by the To-no-nun and a single bell: after the first turn he and his twenty eunuchs took post at the eastern corner of the palace wall, and in bird-like voices, cried out to the public to admire what was passing.

---

* This is probably the Soh Soh of Commander Forbes (vol. ii. p. 120), who considers it to be a representative of the thunder god. I could not find in this buffoonery any mystic meaning: the attendants only begged from us.

First, came thirteen old mothers of the chief captains, followed by eighty women, some with their sticks of office, each carrying in a calabash two heads of cowries. After them trooped forty women and girls with ten strings per head in plates and platters. Then, preceded by small girls, walked the fifteen married princesses in fine raiment. The rest of the procession consisted of nineteen women, bearing on their pates bottles of rum; forty women, each with two heads of cowries; twenty women and young girls, known by their nude bosoms, with ten strings each; and, lastly, the she Meu and Min-gan with thirteen attendants. They circumambulated the square thrice, singing, in peculiar tones, the exploits of the late and the present King, and enumerating their victims.* The presents are for distribution amongst the lieges during the coming night. They have much diminished: in Gezo's time there were 1000 carriers. After the third round some huddled into the palace, and the rest, after again forming up before the King and reciting his titles, followed. It was the usual African inconsequence—£100,000 to carry £20.

---

* All is repeated "by heart," and a tenacious memory is required. But the practice is hard: I rarely passed a palace, when the King was out, without hearing a loud singing lesson within.

Shortly after 6 P.M. we returned to our old sitting-places. The woman Meu, standing amongst twenty chief captainesses, habited in Hausa tobes, addressed her male colleague, who, like the others, was lying elbow-propped on the ground. She informed him that the King, who was worthily making the Customs of his sire, had brought out rum and cowries for his singers—the bards who, in Dahome, preserve all history.* Then the she-Min-gan addressed the men, to the effect that Dahome expects every man to do his duty. Ten bottles of rum and 120 heads of cowries were finally given to the women, and we were graciously dismissed.

---

* The bards are of both sexes, and the women dwell in the palace. These chroniclers and narrators of native tradition are here called "Wenukhodoto," in Egba, "Owgbo." The King keeps a whole troop of these laureates, very different from him of Bonny, who could afford only "Poet Close." On the other hand, the latter could plead the well-known to Anglo-Indians "But, I's English."

SECTION E.

The Zan Nyanyana, or Evil Night.

As we wended our way homewards from the palace to the city gate, we found both sides of the road lined with bamboo railing, to keep the thoroughfare clear for the King: it serves its purpose effectually as policemen and Life Guards in England. To-night Gelele will walk in procession with his wives, and attended by the high officials, from the Komasi House to the Uhun-jro market-place, where the Min-gan will perform sundry executions with his own hand.

As sometimes happens, the subject of Men-huwu* or human sacrifice in Dahome has been thoroughly misunderstood by the press and the public at home. It is by no means done to "keep up the good old customs of the country." The object is not to "offer a valuable and acceptable present to Heaven;" nor is it penance or self-deprivation done because the thing parted with is precious or coveted. The King takes no pleasure in the tortures and death, or in the sight of blood—as will presently appear. The 2000 killed in one day, the canoe paddled in a pool of gore, and other grisly nursery tales, must be derived from Whydah, where the slave-traders invented them, probably to deter Englishmen from visiting the King.

---

* Men (man), huwu (killing). There is no euphuism, as in Yoruba, where such murder is called the "basket sacrifice." Koklo-huwu is the sacrifice of poultry.

It is useless to go over the ground of human sacrifice from the days of the mild Hindu's Naramedha* to the burnings of the Druids, and to the awful massacres of Peru and Mexico. In Europe the extinction of the custom began from the time of polite Augustus. Any Encyclopædia will show that human sacrifice, like slavery, is almost universally a concomitant of a certain stage of civilisation, and that with the increase of knowledge it disappears for ever.

Human sacrifice in Dahome is founded upon a purely religious basis, which not only strengthens but perpetuates the custom. It is a touching instance of the King's filial piety, deplorably mistaken, but perfectly sincere. The Dahoman sovereign must, I have said, enter Deadland † with royal state, accompanied by a ghostly court of leopard wives, head wives, birth-day[*] wives, Afa wives, eunuchs—especially the chief eunuch—singers and drummers, King's "Joto'si" and "King's Devils," bards, and soldiers. This is the object of what we have called the "Grand Customs," when the victims may amount to a maximum of 500. We find the same process extending through the continent to the south-eastern country of the Cazembe, who shows an equal veneration for his "Muzimos" or ancestral ghosts. Every year, moreover, decorum exacts that the first fruits of war and that all criminals should be sent as recruits to swell the King's retinue. Hence the ordinary annual customs. We can hardly find fault with putting criminals to death,[†] when, in the Year of Grace

---

* Or killing a man. So Indra became a god, by the Aswa-medha, or horse sacrifice.

† In the History (p. 204) we read that the moment the death of the

---

king was heard in the palace, the women began to kill themselves and one another: when Sinmenkpen departed life, 595 perished. Gezo ended this abomination by extorting a solemn fetish oath from all his chiefs, men and women. Yet it must be unpleasant to find oneself at Agbome when the king dies: I should imagine that a foreigner would not be safe there at such a time.

[*] Birthday wives are those married on the King's birthday. The Joto 'si are half-heads, male and female, who correspond with the "'Kra," or "'Kla" of the Gold Coast, and rank in Dahome next to the eunuchs. Joto is the ancestor, whom Afa, or the Book of Fate, declares to have sent the child into the world, and the child calls him Joto-che—my Joto. The King's Devils are those who have charge of his Legba or priapus (History, p. 204).

[†] Commodore Wilmot (Appendix III.) should have inserted "crimi-

1864 we hung four murderers upon the same gibbet before 100,000 gaping souls at Liverpool, when we strung up five pirates in front of Newgate, when, during the late age of "hanging Mondays," the Latinist exclaimed,

> Scarce can our fields, such crowds at Tyburn die,
> With hemp the gallows and the fleet supply ;

and when our last Christian king but one killed a starving mother of seventeen, with an infant at her breast, for lifting a yard of linen from a shop counter. A Dahoman visiting England but a few years ago would have witnessed customs almost quite as curious as those which raise our bile now. With respect to slaying captives, it must be remembered that this severity depends upon the nature of African wars ; with these people, *lex talionis* is the highest experience of law, and after defeat quarter is given only to those who are reserved for slavery or for sacrifice. There is, therefore, a shade of excuse for it. The executions are, I believe, performed without cruelty ; these negroes have not invented breaking on the wheel or tearing to pieces their victims, as happened to Ravaillac and the half-

nal" when asserting that the King of Dahome sacrificed his own countrymen.

witted Damiens. Finally, it must be remembered that throughout the year Customs' time is the only period of punishment — that the sacrifice is done openly, enabling all to witness the consequences of crime, and that it seems to wither away all minor offences of violence.

There are always at least two Evil Nights during the annual customs, and there may be more. Commander Forbes, I have said, owns that King Gezo had reduced the number of his victims to thirty-six. The present King has increased them to thirty-nine or forty. But this number must be doubled, to include the female victims killed by the Amazons in the palace, and not permitted to be seen by man.* The presumed total of the "butchery bill" will therefore be seventy-eight or eighty.†

As all who leave the house during the evil night are beheaded, it is not easy to learn what is then enacted. Our bearers, however, afterwards sang a song, how the King had asked a man of the Min-gan, which officer had presented the gift, how the man was charged with a message to Gezo, saying that the Customs were being properly performed, and how he and his fellows are clubbed with knob-sticks.* I could not find out whether, like the Meriah victims of the Khonds, who hardly thanked General Campbell for saving their lives, the doomed are intoxicated: it is probable, the object being to send them to the other world in the best of tempers. Although the missionaries deny the fact, I believe that the King † begins by using a broad sharp blade upon the neck of a kneeling criminal, after which the same is done to others by the Min-gan, the Meu,‡ and their assistants.

---

* The missionaries were at pains to hoodwink my eyes upon this subject, which however, like all things at Agbome, could not be kept secret. When setting up the King's tent in the palace-yard, I saw poles being planted for a scaffold.

† Dr. Lankester calculates six deaths per mensem, as the loss caused by crinoline in London.

Dahome, it will be seen, shows to advantage by the side of Abeokuta, Ashanti, and Benin. When I visited, in 1860, what Mr. Duncan calls that "saintly place of so many converts," one "basket sacrifice," as the Egbas delicately call it, had just been performed; one occurred during our week's residence in the town; and a third immediately after we had left. At Komasi, one man is slain per diem, except on the Wednesdays, which are the King's birthdays; moreover, the death of every caboceer demands a number of victims, whereas in Dahome only a single slave accompanies the Min-gan and the Meu, such honour not being permitted since the early part of Gezo's reign to any other caboceer. Finally, when I visited the city of Great Benin, in 1862, I saw three violent deaths in three days, though the yearly ceremonies had ended, and the large open space before the palace was strewed with human skulls and bones.

---

* This agrees with the History. Others say that, like the Khond victims, they are suffocated by the assistants, who hold their noses and mouths. Decapitation, it will be observed, is the favourite mode of execution at Dahome.

† Dr. M'Leod (p. 65) declares it was known when "his majesty" condescends to become the executioner, and relates that on one occasion a poor fellow objecting to it, and declaring that he was unacquainted with the way, the King cried "I'll show it you;" and with one blow, being very expert, made his head fly many yards from his body, highly indignant that there should have been the least expression of reluctance.

‡ Others say that the Meu executes only Addo-kpon the bush-king's criminals.

But although the Dahoman Customs have been greatly exaggerated and admit some little palliation, the annual destruction of human life is terribly great. However trivial an action is done by the King, such as inventing a new drum, being visited by a white man, or even removing from one palace to another, it must be dutifully reported by some male or female messenger to the paternal ghost.* I can hardly rate the slaughter

* All the victims, however, are not killed. On January 31st, 1864,

at less than 500, in average years of the annual Customs, and at less than 1000 during the year of the Grand Customs. At exceptional occasions, especially of the King's illness, many are slain on the suspicion of witchcraft,* which here, as everywhere in Africa, is a capital offence. During the earthquake which prostrated Accra in 1862, Gelele was informed that his father's ghost had been seen bathing in the sea, and was returning to Agbome. According to Mr. Bernasko he slew two slaves,—others say the unfortunate captives from Ishagga,†—and was surprised to hear that the earthquake had been felt where his father's name was

---

two, a youth and a maiden, were offered up (officially), and kept alive to sweep King Gezo's grave. The sporadic sacrifice mentioned in the text was known to former travellers. "The immolation of victims is not confined to a particular period, for at any time, should it be necessary to send an account to his forefathers of any remarkable event, the king despatches a courier to the shades, by delivering his message to whoever may happen to be near him, and then ordering his head to be chopped off immediately; and it has not unfrequently happened during the present reign, that, as something new has occurred to the King's mind, another messenger (as Mr. C—nn—g very justly observed, like the postscript of a letter) has instantly followed on the same errand, perhaps in itself of the most trivial kind."—Dr. M'Leod, p. 64.

* It must not be forgotten, that even in the days of the Religio Medici, all are denounced as infidels and atheists who deny the reality of witches.

† Joseph Madarikan, an Egban boy recaptured from the Dahomans in March, 1864, asserts that a man named Moses Oshoko, an Ishagga convert, was crucified by the Dahomans, and that William Doherty, an

unknown. The History mentions part of the palace wall at Agbome being overthrown in the days of Sinmenkpen (Adahoonzou II., 1774—1789), when the Europeans, improving the occasion, tried to reform the royal manners. "It does not, however, appear that this representation produced any alteration in the King's behaviour."

It is evident, that to abolish human sacrifice here is to abolish Dahome. The practice originates from filial piety, it is sanctioned by long use and custom, and it is strenuously upheld by a powerful and interested priesthood. That, as our efforts to abolish the slave export trade are successful, these horrors will greatly increase, there is no room to doubt. Finally, the present King is for the present committed to them ; he rose to power by the goodwill of the reactionary party, and upon it he depends. There is a report that his grandsire Agongoro (Wheenoohew) was poisoned because he showed a propensity to Christianity, and the greatest despots are in Yoruba easily told to "go to sleep," or are presented with the parrot's eggs. Gelele, I am persuaded,

---

English subject, was not killed : that he has been put under one of the chief captains, who was charged to be ready to produce him, if demanded even after twenty years.

could not abolish human sacrifice if he would; and he would not if he could. The interference of strangers will cause more secresy, and more decorum in the practice; but the remedy must come from the people themselves.

During the last reign, the victims, gagged and carrying rum and cowries for the people, were marched about, led with cords, and the visitors were compelled to witness the executions.* In 1862-63, the wretches were put to death within hearing, if not within sight, of the white visitors. In 1863-64, the King so far regarded the explicit instructions which I had received, that no life was publicly taken during daytime. This is, let us hope, the small end of the wedge.

SECTION F.

The Minai Afunfun 'khi Uhun-jro men Dadda Gezo;† *or Fifth and last Day of the King's "So-sin Custom."*

During the night, at times, the deep sound of the death-drum and the loud report of a musket informed us that some mortal spirit had fled. The 2nd of January, 1864, opened with a preliminary "palaver," brought by the Buko-no. Some years ago, during the reign of Gezo, when all were employed at the palace, a fire nearly destroyed the city; consequently came forth a royal ordinance, directing every hearth to be kept cold on that day, except within the royal precincts. But, though this restriction does not apply to white visitors, our vexatious host could not help trying his hand at an *avanie*, by which he gained little but contempt.

---

* M. Brandaô, a Portuguese merchant, was so terrified by the executions, that he fled to Whydah, and fell sick there.

† Minai (we go to), afunfun (the small mat tent under which the King sits), 'khi (for akhi, a bazaar or market), Uhun-jro men (in the Uhun-jro space, or on the Uhun-jro day), Dadda Gezo (for Grandfather Gezo).

I was debating whether to decline attending at the palace, as desired to do on the "glad day," when, as if the King had divined my intention, the Prince Chyudaton called upon me at an early hour and explained that all those slain during the last evil night were criminals and captives. At 11 A.M. we proceeded, armed with all our patience, to the Komasi House, where was to take place the ceremony called by strangers "The Procession of the King's Wealth,"*—it should be rather "Of the Royal Poverty."

---

* There is, or used to be, the same annual ceremony in the city of Great Benin, called the "Coral Feast."

The approach to the Palace was not pleasant. The north-eastern or market-shed was empty; out of its tenants, nine had perished. Four corpses, attired in their criminals' shirts and nightcaps, were sitting in pairs upon Gold Coast stools, supported by a double-storied scaffold, about forty feet high, of rough beams, two perpendiculars and as many connecting horizontals. At a little distance, on a similar erection, but made for half the number, were two victims, one above the other. Between these substantial affairs was a gallows of thin posts, some thirty feet tall, with a single victim hanging by his heels, head downwards. Lastly, planted close to the path was a *patibulum* for two, dangling side by side. Fine cords, passed in several coils round the ankles and above the knees, attached them to the cross-bar of the gallows, and the limpness of their limbs showed that the "dear breath" had lately been beaten out of them. There were no signs of violence upon the bodies, which were wholly nude; they had been mutilated after death, in respect to the royal wives, and very little blood appeared upon the ground below.*

---

* M. Jules Gérard (Appendix III.) seems to imagine that the mutilation preceded the execution, which I believe is not the case. The same

We then passed to the south-eastern gate of the Komasi House, where the palace shed was also untenanted. In front of sundry little black dolls, stuck in the ground at both sides of the entrance, lay a dozen heads. They were in two batches of six each, disposed in double lines of three; their faces were downwards, and the cleanly severed necks caught the observer's eye. Around each heap was a raised rim of white ashes. These victims had probably been slaughtered directly in front of the gate, as there were traces of blood there: the bodies had been removed, so as not to offend the King. Within the palace entrance were two more, making a total of fourteen. Thus, during Gelele's "Evil Night," twenty-three human beings had lost their lives.

We sat under the thin shade of the tree garnished with queer fruit and white flags, enjoying the Harmattanish weather, and were greeted by sundry nobles, who politely thanked us for honouring the day with

---

error has been noticed in Mr. Duncan (vol. i. p. 220). Mr. Norris, in 1772, exactly describes the gibbets, with the naked and mutilated victims hanging by the ankles, and he says that they had been clubbed on the head, as by the old Roman "Ammazzatore." A few days afterwards I saw, in the market-place, a dog similarly suspended, as a Vo-sisa, or fetish to prevent disease.

uniform. After a long *séance* we entered the Podoji, or palace-yard, in which we had pitched the tent. It was crammed with dignitaries, male and female, all habited in their gaudiest attire. The time of royal mourning had now passed by, and merriment was once more restored to the nation.

In the centre of the court, which was divided into two by a fence-work of matting, rose a sugar-loaf-shaped pavilion of native make, called the Tokpon. It was supported by a strong central pole, on the top of which, pedestalled upon a little oval, was a small white-capped fetish figure holding a hatchet in the right hand: above it hung a flag, also white, with a chocolate-hued spread-eagle in the centre. Posts of strong scantling, disposed in an inner circle, propped up the heavy flaps, and the outer edge was kept extended by iron rods, some four feet long, planted in the ground and passed through eyelet-holes. Thus was generated a draught which, despite crowding, kept the interior cool. The cloth was of the coarsest material, gaudy but rain-washed; red and yellow were the predominant tints, varied with patches and rags of check. The grotesque ornaments, of different coloured cloths, sewn on to the outside, were lions devouring men and beasts, turkey-buzzards with wings abased, blue snakes, four-legged birds holding swords, and other symptoms of the "ridiculous trade," heraldry. The entrance was garnished with the usual galleries for Vo-sisa, little flags, and Bo-so or fetish stick-bundles: on its proper right squatted the band of women, on the left were ranged calabashes of food and drink. A white calico curtain, passed round the iron bars, prevented our seeing the women and children that crowded the interior, and the mat wall that divided the Podoji showed us only the standards and the umbrellas of the female troops.* Conspicuous objects on the left of the pavilion, were two Ajalela or fetish pots, made by the present King.† Both are lamp-black, shaped liked amphoræ, about four feet high, and planted on tripods. The larger was solid, the smaller was cullendered with many small holes, and both were decorated with brass and silver crescents, stars, and similar ornaments. The second, when filled with water and medicine, allows none to escape, so great is its fetish power; an army guarded by it can never be defeated, and it will lead the way to Abeokuta. Towards the end of the procession the smaller vase was carried off by the men, after they had made obeisance to the King. The women, with similar ceremony, presently removed the other.

---

* This Tokpon is accurately described by Mr. Norris, but the illustration in the History (opposite p. 135) has been drawn by the artist upon his imagination. The same may be said about all the plates in that book. Commander Forbes (vol. ii. p. 33) is but little more correct. Mr. Cruikshank measured, at the King's request, his largest Tokpon, and found it to be 54 feet in diameter, by about the same height, supported by twenty-four posts, besides the central pole, and raised at the flap by eighty-five iron rods.

† As Gezo sat under the Adanzan shed, so Gelele performs the Ajalela fetish. The pot reminded me of that given to the old Janissaries.

We were seated but a short time under the thin tamarind tree when a fall of matting on the proper left of the pavilion and almost in front of us, was raised, and the royal leopard wives and Amazons, copiously besilvered, ushered in the King. He was more dressed than usual, in a skull-cap of puce-coloured satin and a toga of violet silk ; a rapier, the gift of Captain Wilmot, was swung to his shoulder by a crimson silk sash, and an ignoble necklace of imitation jewellery lay upon his broad breast : he walked under a red parasol, with the usual plated spittoon by his side. To the music of a full band he crossed the court, waiting to return our salutes as we advanced towards him, and entered the Tokpon, when its white curtain was removed. We then betook ourselves to our chairs, which were placed near the royal fetishers, who sat grouped under a black and tattered umbrella, fronted by about twenty iron sticks planted in the ground, some cresset shaped and quaintly capped with the tortoise, others crescents and demi-lunes, and mostly decorated with pendents of cowries. Immediately by our side squatted a little knot, the King's sons, the youngest of whom might be twelve years old. Dako, the eldest, who had just been made a caboceer, was a plain youth about twenty, with an unpleasant countenance. He is, I believe, the heir apparent. Presently we were joined by the Hun-to-ji, or king's silversmith, a high official, whose long calico gown, white pantaloons, straw hat, slippers and European chain, proved his Brazilian descent. Under him are workmen who will convert dollars—gold has no value here—into chains, rings and crucifixes : all are of the rudest make, and when tested with nitrate of silver they become lead coloured.

This was to be, as is the present King's practice, a mixed Custom. It began with a general salutation on the part of the singers and drummers, who in silver horns and bracelets danced before the throne, and waved their horse-tail fly-flappers. They were followed by the chief ministers, splendid in silk robes of Hausa cut, resembling the Arab's "aba," short sleeved and hanging to the ankles: as there must be something ill sorted about the African, their multitudinous necklaces and silver charms reposed upon common, and by no means cleanly, trade shirts. A troop of "guiriots," or jesters, knelt before the throne, pushed and shoved one another, contorted their countenances, and exchanged all manner of buffooneries to amuse the King. The Kpo-fen-'su,* captain of blunderbusses, headsman, and headman of jesters, a living old skeleton, wore a long red cap hanging on his shoulder, with broad white circles of chalk round his eyes and mouth, that made his countenance look at a distance like a leather-covered skull. This pipe-claying, and here and there a streak of black made with gunpowder, are the only remains of the "uncouth devices painted on the face and body, and giving a very fiend-like appearance." The coadjutress in the inside is similarly goggled. The jesters were followed by a dozen pursuivants armed with gong-gongs, who advanced bending towards the throne, and shouted the "strong names," or titles. Conspicuous amongst them was an oldster in a crimson sleeveless tunic and yellow shorts: his head was red with dust, he carried a large bill-hook, and he went about attended by four drums and one cymbal.

---

* The Poh-veh-soo of Commander Forbes. The name means Kpo (leopard), fen (claw), 'su (grown); *viz.*, "He can prey on all beasts," and is a title originally given by Tegbwesun.

After this preliminary, the processions began to pass round the yard. The line, which affected a funereal slowness, marching to the sound of one cymbal and a chorus of women, was composed of eighty-five men; first the ministers, then the governors, and lastly the minor chiefs. They were led by the new Ajyaho, who was bareheaded; his right hand rested upon a long cane, and his left held a bill-hook; a brass-hilted sword and a little dirk were stuck in both sides of his belt. Next came the Min-gan, who had a deer's head of thin brass hanging from his girdle; and who, in quality of king's Calcraft-in-Chief, carried a long, straight, and sheathed blade. Then bent the old Meu, supporting himself upon a beadle's silver-headed cane; attached by a narrow fillet or bandeau of velvet to the left side of his head was a small silver-mounted dirk or dagger, worn point downwards. The Yevo-gan, like all the rest, carried a cane; he was armed with a bill-hook, and from his girdle depended a brass-scabbarded blade. The Adanejan wore silver horns and bracelets, and displayed his finery over an old trade shirt. He was followed by his father, the Alo-lokpo-nun-gan,* a brother of the late king, who wore four knives, in pairs, attached to both temples by a hoop stiff with silver. Of the rest, some went bareheaded, others had caps; one wore a tin crown, a circlet and four branches meeting at the poll; and several had flat silver plates three to four inches in diameter, fixed tightly on the scalp by a concealed lock of hair. There was a profusion of necklaces and bracelets; not a few displayed themselves in the dignity of cast-off merino coats and ancient capes hardly extending to the waist; all wore long sashes hanging down their left sides, and besides carrying long staves they were well armed. Here was an old cavalry sabre with open guard, there a straight blade with silver hilt, there a broad-headed Dahoman bill-hook. Sizing was not the rule; in places a quasi-dwarf was followed by a tall fellow who could eat from off his neighbour's head. As these Guys passed the entrance of the royal pavilion they did obeisance, and after the third turn they formed line opposite the tent, knelt, bending low, and, at a given signal of a fugleman on the right, touched the ground with their foreheads and arose. This was the invariable conclusion of each act, and the whole was about as sensible as those Temperance and other gatherings with flags and banners, which make men wonder what satisfaction rational Beings can derive from them. Each procession lasted from eight to twenty minutes.

---

* Alo (hand), lokpo (one), nun (mouth), gan (captain.)

The ministers were followed at some interval by another Indian file of fifty men, the chief captains, body-servants, and headmen of singers and drummers. They were conducted by a "Lali,"* or half-head, with the right side of his pericranium clean shaven, and the left in a casing of silver, that looked like a cast, or a half melon. This unique cap was solid below, barred above, and disclosing the black hair beneath; it was fastened to the head by a tight string. Each man had his musket. Two were under Ta-bla†—huge broad-brims, stiff with tin plates nailed on a surface of red cloth, and edged with frames of trade looking-glasses flapping in the air. I much wondered who could have been the hatter. Adan-men-nun-kon, the Capitano

---

* Any "half head" is called a Lali.

† The Ta-bla is so called because tied to the head. Some fetisheers, especially women, wear, perched upon the tops of their polls, and lashed on, the cranium not being able to get into the *coiffure*, ridiculous little steeple hats of straw, with the broadest brims, and the thinnest possible steeples.

Sparafucile, was there, fierce as ever, with red scarf and cartridge-box, a war axe on his left shoulder, and a carbine on his right. The To-no-nun carried a bunch of keys. There were the two tall casque men with their very long guns, habited in black frock coats, over which hung their coral necklaces, and with common pagnes, knotted on the left sides under the European garb, so as to make them appear deformed. The Buko-no, our host, joined them, having previously extracted from a large calabash a dozen necklaces, a pair of mushroom-shaped silver horns, and a watch that wanted only glass and main-spring. In the rear were two blunderbusses, and the last was a melancholy-looking Grimaldi, smoking a bone by way of pipe, whose ashes he occasionally halted to remove.

At the end of the third circuit, a chosen few received presents of rum and bracelets; all kissed the ground, and presented arms, a knife in the right and a gun in the left hand; whilst bells tinkled and snake-bone and watchmen's rattles were sprung. Again the fall of matting was raised, and issued from the harem a corresponding procession of she ministers. Before these noble dames began marching round, sundry old messengeresses, slaves of the palace, knelt in line upon the open space in front of us, forming the demarcation between the sexes. In the pride of that utterly gratuitous virtue, celibacy, they passed demurely round, reserved as nuns, and for the same reason: they rarely allowed a glance to fall upon us males, pitying, I presume, our poor hearts. First came the five great honours of the empire,—the Ajyaho, the Min-gan, the Meu, the Yevogan, and the Adanejan. The Min-gan had a bill-hook in her left hand, as executioneress of the inside; the others used staves or sticks, and all carried swords at their left sides. These five were habited in long Hausa tobes of red silk, the upper garb light and the skirt heavy, and two wore tin crowns over red calico. They were followed by the lesser dignities in blue striped togas of similar cut, and some had their heads bound with white calico, like the male singers and fetisheers. This file walked somewhat faster than the men, to the music of a band playing in the tent. After the third circumambulation, they formed up in line before the King, waved both hands four times, and quickly retired behind the matting.

Then came the captainesses, forty-two in number, corresponding with the men. First stalked two "silver half-heads," with pouches on their right sides, cartridge boxes round their waists, and bill-hooks whose handles were swathed in cloth. Then came the Khe-tun-gan and the Akpadume, the she-Gau and the Meu, elderly women, far too stout for active service. Behind them were two heroines, decorated with beards of monkey skin, and men's nightgear of white calico. A pair of bayonet women followed, with silver sharks on their red "Liberty Caps." Number nine was a very bulky old figure, in the cook's bonnet of the 'Mman, or Madcap company described at Kana: she is one of the captainesses of the right, or Min-gan's side. There were also steeple-crowned broad-brims, as amongst the males. Some had shaggy skull-caps, like pepper-corn hair, stained a deep indigo, and others had applied to their locks the dye which contrasted well with the silver ornaments. Others had big fool's caps of stuffs striped white, blue, and red, and hanging over their shoulders. All wore sashes with the ends depending in front; and carried, at half-cock, muskets or blunderbusses, with the muzzle cap off. Some were decorated with a human skull, or with a lower jaw, fixed to a thin brass plate dangling from the waist. At the end of the performance they formed line before the King, saluted, firstly, with the right hand; secondly, with presented guns and knives, and again disappeared within the harem.

After the drummers and heralds had played some antics before the royal tent, dancing, springing rattles, and powdering themselves with dust, a very ridiculous procession was formed. The male ministers had changed their dresses for motley, and staff-propped, with left shoulders covered, and pipes alight—both showing them to be privileged persons—they again promenaded before the King. The Ajyaho wore, like Prince Chyudaton, a straw hat with a broad black ribbon; the meagre face of the black Min-gan was buried in a vast old felt, and a cockaded cocked hat of the last century, very dingy and frayed, and worn on the wrong side, well suited the age-bleared eyes, the hollow cheeks, and the fallen-in lips of the fox-like Meu. The latter also had fastened on his silver armlets over a trade shirt. The best man of the party was the Yevo-gan, who, residing at Whydah, had achieved a chimney-pot hat, whilst the others were fain to be content with caps, straw hats, billycocks, cotton extinguishers, sailors' waterproofs, crocodile caps, calico fillets, and even bare scalps. Adanejan smoked a German student's pipe, the others being reduced to long and short white clays—mostly French, with monkey and skull bowls—to native manufacture, or to none. Each time the procession passed the royal tent, the old and tattered garments were changed for others just as bad. At the end they bowed with their hats before the King, bared their bodies to the waist, knelt, made obeisance, and retired.

Then was the turn for the men captains, who also, like the ministers, appeared before the King with wrapped-up shoulders, smoking pipes: all were armed with muskets as before. One old officer of the 'Mman Guards carried a double sword, like huge scissors. The To-no-nun and another official wore the robes of an Egyptian fellah. The Buko-no was habited in an ancient Turkish rug, which he held magnificent, and he smoked with an air a pestilent Bahia cigar. After the third tour, all tucked up their clothes, knelt down, and saluted the King ceremoniously by kissing the ground, palm-clapping in three sets, again kissing the ground, clapping palms, and finally by rising and upraising weapons.

This necessitated two other processions from the inside, namely, of she ministers and captainesses, who were muffled up, and who smoked like the men. At the close of the circumambulation the members of both bodies sat on their heels before the King, alternately kissed the ground four, and clapped palms three times, and then rising presented arms. A few of the warrioresses sang in "the presence" with the forefinger emphatically cutting the air. This brought on a male chant touching Abeokuta, which also concluded with raised weapons. The rum, which had been copiously sent from the King's pavilion, now began to take effect upon the African brain. Our table was soon spread with liquor, baskets of oranges, and boiled manioc, whilst the chiefs were supplied by their wives and slave girls with food and drink brought in large calabashes.* It is the habit to dine before the King at Agbome. The Buko-no's "Princess" came, attended by twenty of her women. She was a brown girl, about eighteen, with the comeliness of that age, and much resembling the King: her coralled arms were rounded, and her hands well made; a number of necklaces hung upon a high and ample bosom, modestly covered with a fine white cloth, and a double row of brass and silver circlets, like new sixpences,† studded her cauliflower *coiffure*. Whilst the slave girls behind, after spreading a table-cloth upon dried reeds, she retired to the rear, and kneeling,* bent to the earth. She then served her husband with her own hands, touched the ground with her forehead, and bent before him with averted head during the whole meal, never raising her face, as it would be deemed "bold" to stare at him; but using, Lesbia-like, a roving eye. The old Harpagon having washed his hands, ate with a claw like that of a prey-bird, and seemed to enjoy the sensation caused by the buxom wife's presence.

---

* These in Ffon are called "Kago," amongst the Egbas "Panshukú."

† These, I suppose, are the coronets of silver mentioned by Mr. Duncan (vol. i. p. 254).

The misery of the display moved my compassion. In the whole assembly there was hardly a redeeming point of picturesqueness or appropriateness except the "Porto Novo" Moslems. As they stood at the other end of the court, their swart faces were set off by snowy turbans encircling tall red caps, and hanging down somewhat in the "Taylasan" style, whilst their showy shawls, thrown over the left shoulder, their neat sandals, their full dark pajammas or drawers, and their ample white shirts, made them appear different and superior beings. The wretched pagans, however, had imitated them: amongst the occupants of the harem I saw two poor copies of "El Islam."

---

* So Dr. M'Leod says, "By thus constantly practising genuflexion upon the hard ground, their knees in time become almost as hard as their heels."

A troop of "Joto-si," drummers, and half heads, of all ages, made obeisance before and presented arms to the King. Then the Min-gan arose, and addressed his men, to the cries of "Tamule!" from the women, upon the subject of Abeokuta. He said that Gezo's son had just made a custom, and had killed criminals for his father, who must desire the destruction of Egba-land, and he called upon me by name to testify to the same. Thrice, as he spoke, the Meu stood up, and with outstretched right hand, vociferated "Yáté!" meaning, in Fanti, "we understand." The King responded briefly, that whereas ashes never smoke, the cinders in that palace would burn down many a house.

In these slow proceedings, 3·40 P.M. had already sped before business began. Presently an occasional rattle, the *vagitus* of women calling out, in bird-like tones, the King's titles, and the long firing of heavily loaded muskets by the male soldiery behind us and on our right, announced the beginning of the end. The first motley group that passed us was composed of drums, duck-guns, muskets, small infernal machines on wheels, blue-clad bayonet women, blunderbusses of brass and iron, soldieresses in grass-cloth skirts, and their band of loud braying horns, one duck-gun, one huge blunderbuss, small metal whistles and long flageolets, two dozen razor women, with as many knife women, and finally, a captainess of Gezo's force. They halted before the throne, danced, played, fired guns, cheered, presented arms, and having received largesse in rum and cowries, passed out of the palace-yard through the main gate by which we had entered it. Followed a Mau-no* fetish woman under her umbrella, with a troop call Lisa-'si,† waving peculiar iron rods, serpent-shaped, like the classical Jove's thunderbolts, as expressed by poets and painters ; some wore white turbans, others were bareheaded, and all were hung about with long strings of white and black beads. The party was brought up by slave girls carrying baskets and calabashes. Then, preceded by six bellowing horns, stalked in slowly, and with measured gait, the eight Tansi-no, who serve and pray for the ghosts of dead kings. In front went their ensign, a copper measuring-rod, fifteen feet long, and tapering to a fine end: behind it were two chauris and seven mysterious pots and calabashes wrapped in white and red checks. The old women seemed to wear about forty cloths each, which may account for their elephantine development *à tergo;* they were followed by three little girls, and they "louted" low as the vulgar herd before the King.

---

* From mâu (fetish of moon), and nò (a mother).

† From Lisa (fetish of sun), and 'si (a wife).

The Aro company of archers danced in the presence, and recited the royal titles. The *valuables* now appeared, and almost any pawnbroker's shop could boast a collection more costly and less heterogeneous. The only remarkable article was the carrier, who represented—in Cuba—a large sum. Sixteen brilliant banners held horizontally preceded a wheelbarrow with a fancy red and blue flag. Three brass, four copper, and six iron pots, curiosities on account of their great size. Four long horns in calico *étuis.* Five huge fans, followed by razor women. Eight images, of which three were apparently ship's figure-heads white washed, and the rest very hideous efforts of native art. Sixty-seven women with brown faces, and bead mittens and gauntlets on their wrists. Twenty-one girls carrying* cylinders of red and white beads. Seventeen women with silver plates fastened to the sides of their skulls, habited in red clothes, and handling bead cat-o'-nine-tails. Twelve women, also in red. Seventeen fetish pots, three jars, one silver-plated urn, attended by singing women. Twenty casque-women with red tunics, and plumes, and black horsetails. Eight helmet girls, with red plumes, dark crests, and coats, and white loin cloths. Six pieces of plate, a tree, a crane, a monkey, and other things which I could not distinguish. Some were four feet high, and all were apparently silver, borne by many women on boards: of these three were double, and the whole were intended as jewels to decorate the present King's grave. After singers and dancers, a huge drum, carried by a woman porter, whilst the performer walked behind her mate "leathering" it with a will. Three large chairs, preceding about fifty Gbe-to,* or elephant huntresses, clad in chocolate and dark blue, and ostentatiously eschewing white. They had huge tufts of hair, affected large heavy guns, and were conspicuous for bussles of talismans behind, and strings of cowries in front, adorning bits of bone, relics of the enemy. Four pots in their cloths. A large silver-mounted ebony box, like a bullock trunk. One big stool, one common trade box, and one calabash. Two iron horns shaped like palm leaves, and a dozen small girls preceding the mysterious Zan-ku-ku.* It was a portable screen, work, of blue checked and striped cloths, upheld by women with muskets and sticks, and it contained a gold-topped crimson umbrella. Zan-ku-ku is the "place" of the old King: no one is supposed to know what is inside. Men turned away their heads, and my questions remained unanswered till we returned home. A large band with twenty muskets, and three women in broad-brimmed felts. Fourteen fetish women, who perform rites for the last sovereign's ghost, in white caps and tunics of bright yellow grass-cloth. Five black girls, dressed in blue, who were saluted with drums and horns as they passed us. Six flags turned towards the right-hand, a caboceeress under an umbrella, a pipe-bearer, and a dozen unarmed girls. Two women carrying water breakers, three with pots from which depended white streamers, and two large glass jars. A line of 703 women and girls with "grey-beards," seltzer jars, country pots of "pitto"* or native beer, and bottles of trade rum and gin, the size of the receptacle becoming small by degrees, and the whole supported by a rear-guard. The liquor will this night be distributed in the market-place to the multitude: and the heralds behind us returned praise by crying out the King's "strong names," trilling out the words by patting their lips, while the women around the monarch uttered the Khé or bird sound. A motley group surrounding two women in big felts. A band and a troop of bardesses,—the first rank with eight singer's staves, distinguished by their triangles of glazed calico, the second being an armed and an unarmed company: they paraded round the court, played and sang on the right of the tent entrance, and received glasses of rum. At this time the King kindly supplied us with cashew fruits (alakazú), tiger-nuts (f'iu), and the red fruit of

---

* In this part of Africa "carrying," always means on the head.

---

* Gbé (a bush, not to be confounded with Gbè, the world), and to (father, or he that does).

---

* Zan (night), ku-ku (dead dead), meaning that Gezo, like Queen Anne, has departed this life.

---

* This is the beer of Dahome. It is either of rice or maize—the former being by far the more delicate—and is made in the usual African way. The grain is soaked, sun-dried upon a mat, and wetted with water, till germination develops the saccharine principle. It is again sun-dried, coarsely ground and boiled with water; after which it is cooled and drunk. The main objection to it, as to palm wine, is that it will not keep. The older travellers seem agreed to hold it an unwholesome beverage. I have ever found it the reverse.

the Lisé tree noticed at Whydah. It certainly rained meat and drink that day in the palace, but, I suspect, nowhere else.

Then came two girls, waving round and round small white flags, upon which were horned and rainbow-coloured serpents swallowing their own tails. A band in front of the late King's great war-drum, "He-is-able-to-do-anything." Ten smaller drums of the King's, called Addugba, and common instruments. Seven troubadour-women, holding horse-tails and twirling flags in their left hands: their heads were wrapped in kerchiefs of red, shawl pattern, and their short scarlet cloaks had yellow hoods showing lions with upturned tails. Assisted by fifty women, they danced long and violently before the King, whilst the band, squatting near the flag of the tent-entrance, regaled us with stunning music. A woman carrying a huge battle-axe perforated like a fish-slicer. Forty-two girls bearing baskets of cowries on wooden platters—sixpence above, and £200 below! A large flag, two immense native stools of black and white wood, covered with cloth; two articles, like warming-pans, of copper and brass, a drum rudely carved with native figures, and an escort of bayonet women. Two "black white men," natives of the country, dressed in trowsers and blouses, but shoeless, walking under ragged parasols.* Another of Gezo's drums, about the size of a bullock, carried by four men, with two poles lashed along its sides. Another European piece of plate on a wheeled car, covered with red calico; bayonet women, and a large box of skulls. Finally, the Agran-hohwe,† or jaw-umbrella, whose white top and lappets were thickly studded over with these pleasant reliques.

Then the royal equipages began to pass, the animals being men harnessed with ropes. Most of them are old barouches and other presents given to the kings when slavery was an important branch of English commerce, and when the Home Government supported William's Fort. Many of these heirlooms are becoming valuable as antiques. The first were of home, or native manufacture—a blue-green shandridan, with two short flagstaffs attached to the front. Two things, like Palkigaris, or *broncards*, supporting a light umbrella. The present King's cab-brougham, with a lion on the panels.

---

* The King is said also to have similar "white *women*," but I did not see any. Dr. M'Leod (p. 106), notices these black whites, whom the King would authorise to assume the European dress, carry an English umbrella, and wear shoes.

† Agran means a jaw-bone (inferior and human).

Two American trotting wagons, with leathern hoods. A band of flageolets, followed by a man in a red blanket, with the Bedouin hood. After a space, a male slave carrying a long blue pole, topped with an imitation knife, stained red. Another broken-down vehicle. Two large old canopied hammocks, the one of red velvet, the other of yellow silk, belonging to the late King, and borne by men. The present sovereign's little roan pony, with black points, led also by a man. A peculiar old sedan-chair, dating from the days of Mr. Nash. Another state hammock; a wheeled platform, with a bench for two, behind a large wooden horned eagle and a bunchy plume of feathers; a rocking-horse, with housings and bridle, on wheels; rattles; a large green chariot, of venerable appearance, belonging to King Gezo; four hunchbacks; two flags; an enormous red-and-green board, for playing "tables," carried on two men's heads; another antiquated shandridan, followed by a band of horns and chanting knife women; a large Gold Coast chair on a small nag; two big Katake, or war foot-stools; a Men-ta-'zinkpo,* or large chair, adorned with four or five human crania, and with its footstool cut out of one piece; a French drum and tambourine; a smaller drum, with twelve skulls; three boxes; a platform on wheels, followed by women; a Bath chair, with a fringed red silk umbrella attached to it; a fighting man, in wood, with drawn sword—probably the figure-head of some "Ajax;" a large hammock, with bead hangings, and a pole inlaid with brass; four umbrellas; a small troop of she-hunchbacks; bands; little iron and brass swivel guns, carried on women's heads; a peculiar sedan-chair, with gold and red hangings, held high in the air, with four parasols to show that it is used by the King; drummers; a metal soup-tureen; nine large bottles, covered with red cloth and hung with cowries; urns, jars, and *pateræ* of vermilion-coloured earthenware, adorned with gingerbread gilding, very large, and decorated with hangings of white and red calico. Such was the *fripier's* collection which passed in motley confusion before the King, whilst the carriers sang, danced, and made obeisance.

---

* Men (man), ta (head), 'zinkpo, for azinkpo (a native chair). Azinkpo yevo is a white man's chair.

Then defiled a body of armed women preceding seven umbrellas, of which two were very gorgeous, shading nine "leopard wives" in bright clothing, with swords, and a profusion of silver studs in their wool.

Like the others they made salutations, drank rum, and received small presents from their lord. Another string of frippery, consisting of two home-made images with white heads and blue skins, like the Egban Yemaya or Goddess of Books; a short St. Lawrence and Gridiron; a Dominican friar and other statuettes; the skulls of Bakoko and his two companions, carried in honour on young girls' heads; a tree under a globular glass shade; red jars before described; fancy native stools with and without cowries; umbrellas and parasols also adorned with shells, and many minor items which I had not time to note.

Presently the Vi-de-k'alo *—the Amazon Bi-na-zun, or storekeeper—a portable personage, dressed in a white body cloth and a pink skirt, with a broad-brimmed and gold laced hat, apparently beaver, upon a head swathed in calico, appeared, shaded by a red parasol. She was followed by three long-poled flags, tricolor, and eagles, dating probably from the days of the elder Napoleon; a troop of girls with jugs, ewers, jars and "lustre" pottery, seven desks of old shape, basins and pitchers all empty, pipe cases six feet long,

---

* Vi (child), de (any), k'alo (stretching out the arms as when a child wishes to be carried).

four large stools, two parasols, and a fat sheep with a necklace of cowries and a cloth over its hinder parts.

The next party was headed by twenty blunderbuss women in red caps, with silver sharks. Then eight fine umbrellas, denoting as many of the late King's "leopard wives," old and worn out women richly clad in red and yellow silk cloaks, with fillets, bracelets, and sword-hilts of silver; the most dignified propped themselves with beadle's sticks. A silver half-head woman with four bracelets, emitting from a long brass trumpet lugubrious noises. Twenty-three fetish sticks in cloth bags; a red velvet cushion with silver lions on it; glass platters; heaps of cowries, like mould puddings; porcelain jars; a curious China vase, and the two scarlet shields of the harem. Next came the Yavedo, female To-no-nun or chief eunuchess, who is also the elder of Mr. Dawson's two mothers, in a black crested casque and red plumes, followed by two fancy and crimson flags; six kettledrum girls, in scarlet caps and boddices, and blue skirts with figures of red cloth sewn on; drums and drumlets; a calabash with a pyramid of four skulls; two women with long tails, of which they caught hold after dancing and bounding before the King;[*] a group of fifty Nago or captive Egba women in dark indigo dresses, celebrated as dancers, and jingling peculiar rattles thickly covered with cowries; an old cut glass chandelier slung to a wonderful white bird of native build eating a blue snake; seven parasols, and stools carved and imaged.

Already, to our joy, those who had passed out of the palace gate before the King, and had thrice walked round the square in single file, began to return. Then appeared the living representatives of the mothers of the Dahoman dynasty. As will be seen the three first queens are not represented, showing that their names have been forgotten. The places of "Zoindi," the present sovereign's mother, who still survives, and Danh-li-ke,[*] the parent of the "Bush king," were under white umbrellas, followed by baskets, calabashes, chairs, footstools, and a band: the retinue might be composed of a hundred people. The representatives were stout old women, remarkable, like the five others, for breadth of beam and brim.

A torn flag, neptunes full of skulls, calabashes, stools, pots, and other articles of furniture, preceded

---

[*] The reader will find this dance described in Chapter XVI.

[†] Danh (the rainbow), li (stand), and ke (the world).

Agotime, mother of Gezo, and Nutobe, the parent of the corresponding "Bush king." *

Two umbrellas, buff-coloured and fancy, with a band, accompanied a dwarfish dignitary with silver crown, big-topped staff, and red train borne by followers. This was Senunme, mother of Agongoro (Wheenoohew), the grandfather of the present King.

A pair of umbrellas, buff and fancy, with seats, calabashes, and other necessaries, composed the *cortége* of Hunajile, mother of Sinmenkpen (Adahoonzou II.).

An elderly woman in a red coat, with a white kerchief under her broad brim, represented Chai, the mother of Tegbwesun (Bossa Ahadi).

A similar umbrella, succeeded by skulls and rattles, denoted Addono, the mother of Agaja the conqueror (Guaja Trudo Audati).

The rear was rapidly brought up. It consisted of various other "drums for Ganikbaja;" women in red nightcaps, with a silver shark on each side fastened by a string; a band of small girls, four wall pieces, fancy flags, four pikes with pink hangings and cross pieces

---

* Mr. Duncan (vol. i. p. 254) thinks of these old women as if they were really royal mothers and grandmothers, and he makes one to be a century old, "being surprised to see with what agility they moved, considering their years."

like our old demi-lune, carried by women in fools' caps slashed blue and rose; razor women; a huge scimitar; an English union-jack; all kinds of bands; five plain standards attended by a large troop; four small girls with red pennons; a company of singers, commanded by an old woman in a broad brim, and followed by two chairs; muskets and blunderbusses. After this party had formed up in line before the King, and had delivered themselves of a song, whose length appeared uncalled for, came eight skull-standards, carried by women in indigo; the Komasi drum; two brass shields, segments of circles; six headwomen with bracelets and armlets above the elbow, with white and spotted body-cloths, silver horns and caps like cook's bonnets; then two broad blades worked like fish-slicers, rising from skulls; sundry black hide shields like tea-trays; ten women carrying Bo-kpo or forked crutches swathed with red calico. A crowd of thirty umbrellas now defiled through the yard, the headwoman sitting upon her tall stool to watch the retinue marching by. Finally the she Min-gan again passed before us, when we remarked that two of her retinue were habited in the striped nightcaps and shirts of the executed criminals, whose wardrobes here, as in England they say, become the perquisite of Jack Ketch. The number tallied with the three naked corpses suspended near the city gate, and this satisfied me that we had seen all the males slain on this occasion, and that the women victims, whose spoils had been taken by their *bourreaux*, did not exceed in number the men.

The ceremony was necessarily hurried, because it began late, and was exceedingly complicated ; our jaded old host groaned with misery whenever I proposed another question. The more time was wasted, because every little party formed up opposite the royal tent entrance, made obeisance according to the several ranks, and secured cowries and rum before retiring. Women of rank merely touched the spirits, and poured the remainder down the throats of their followers ; and, despite the urgency of messengers, none appeared willing to slur over or to hurry through their honours.

After a stunning salute of blunderbusses we were called up to meet the King, who came forward to shake hands and snap fingers with us. As he admired my regimental sword, I placed it in his hands : he returned it, saying that we would speak about the matter at another time. He then requested me to take the measure of his big Tokpon tent. As something was said about our attending on the morrow, I put forward a request that we might be allowed to pass the Sunday at home. This he at once conceded with the best grace: visitors obtain everything (unimportant) which they ask from him, whilst the "difficulty makers," his ministers and officials, grant nothing that they can possibly refuse.

Seven mortal hours of *séance* had halted by before the elder Yevogan led us out of the palace. Though it was waxing dark we could see the railing still lining the streets. We hurried past the dead bodies, upon which the heat had already taken effect; and we were right glad to find ourselves once more *à table.*

The next day, Sunday, was emphatically one of rest to eyes and ears dazed and fatigued by the confusion of multitudinous objects rapidly passing, and by the terrible din of a Dahoman crowd. The only drawback to our comfort was that the Message had not been given, although we had been nearly a fortnight with the King. The Buko-no bore the major part of the blame: this Cagliostro was probably awaiting the permission of his Afa.

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE SO-CALLED AMAZONS AND THE DAHOMAN ARMY.

A CHRONIC exaggeration touching the mis-called "Amazons"* has of late years prevailed in England. Mr. Duncan found it "certainly a surprising sight in an uncivilised country." Commander Forbes, who drew, as artists say, "from feeling," was the first to colour the melodramatic picture with a "sensation" and picturesqueness, a sentiment and a wild romance, in which the real object is wholly wanting. He begins his account with the untravelled statement that "there is not a more extraordinary army in the world than that of the military nation of Dahome."

---

* The word is probably some barbarian term Grecised. It has three popular derivations—the Scythian, Amm Azzon, which the Greeks interpreted, "without breasts;" ἄνευ μὰζου, without a breast (the right), mythically believed to have been removed for the better use of the bow; thirdly, ἅμαζωσας, or women living together.

In Dahome the soldieresses have two titles, Akho-'si, also applied to the eunuchry, means king's (Akhosu) wife ('si). The other and equally popular name is Mi-no, our (mi) mothers (no). The system of motherhood is completely mistaken by Mr. Duncan (Vol. I. p. 228). The commonalty rarely know their ranks and titles, and scarcely even their private names. The doings inside the palace are always spoken of *sotto voce*. The Anglo-African calls them "Ama-johns," for which also a derivation might perhaps be found.

The origin of the somewhat exceptional organisation is, I have said, the masculine *physique* of the women, enabling them to compete with men in enduring toil, hardships, and privations. I have remarked this corporeal equality of the sexes in the Grand Bonny and the "Oil Rivers" of the Biafran Bight, where the feminine harshness of feature and robustness of form rival the masculine ; and writers upon Siam have made the same observation.

Bosman (1700) allows the kinglet of Whydah 4000 to 5000 wives, who, besides labouring in the fields, were used to execute the royal sentences.* The monarch of Yoruba, according to Clapperton, could boast that his wives, of whom some composed his body-guard, would, linked hand in hand, reach clean across his kingdom. The late King Gezo used to boast that he had organized the Mi-no; but the History depicts them before he was born. The Europeans who visited Agaja (1708—1730), found the Dahoman Court much as it is at the present day. "If the chief officers wished to speak to the King they first kissed the ground, then whispered their pleasure into the ear of an old woman, who communicated it to the King, and brought his answer." The same volume also informs us that the warlike monarch, when his force had been reduced by the "Eyeos," "armed a great number of women like soldiers, having their proper officers, and furnished like regular troops with drums, colours, and umbrellas, making at a distance a very formidable appearance." With these, in about A.D. 1728, he attacked and defeated the combined host of the Whydahs and Popos, and since that time the Amazons have ever been a power in the empire.*

---

* Of these women 300 to 400 would be sent to strip the offender's house, and to lay it level with the ground. But the King of Dahome, it must be observed, distinguishes between his wives and his soldieresses. At Court the former are unarmed, the latter carry weapons, and do not commonly expect his particular attentions. The difference has been overlooked by Dr. M'Leod (p. 38), and by almost all subsequent writers.

Doubtless Gezo, one of the most successful amongst the Dahoman monarchs, regarded the feminine force with favouring eye. He depended upon it to check the turbulence and treachery of his subjects, and to ensure his own safety, for

---

* Mr. Bulfinch Lamb, present at the capture of Allada by the same king, in 1724, mentions 2000 royal wives, but does not allude to "Amazons," which may be explained by the brevity of his communication.

> "Qui terret plus ipse timet; sors ista tyrannis
> Convenit."

He may have also wished to cause rivalry, by the example of what is in most cases illogically termed the "weaker sex."* Perhaps, like the old-school Anglo-Indian

---

* Because we make it so. The feminidæ, like the females of the equidæ, show little corporeal inferiority to the males, and the best proof is, that amongst tribes living in the so called State of Nature, women are generally the only labourers. We may etiolate them, as in New England, or we may expand them, by beef and beer, to grenadiers, as in olden England and in the north of Europe. To the present day, the woman of the Scotch fishing islands is the man of the family, who does not marry till she can support what she produces; and the times are not long passed since she was, amongst the Southrons, a barber, a mason, and a day labourer.

It appears to me that in England there is a revival of the feminine industries; and as it is asked, "What shall we do with our old maids?" I would reply, that many might be enlisted. When Mr. Duncan was asked by the King of Dahome if the same number of English women would equal the Amazons, he, of course, answered *no;* we had no female soldiers in England, but we had women who, individually and voluntarily, had equally distinguished themselves. Such feminine troops would serve well in garrison, and eventually in the field. The Medea of Euripides preferred the risks of spear and shield amongst men to a single casualty after the manner of women. The warlike instinct, as the annals of the four quarters of the globe prove, is easily bred in the opposite sex. A sprinkling of youth and beauty amongst the European Amazons would make campaigning a pleasure to us; and the measure may be taken into consideration when our new-fangled rage for neutrality shall be succeeded by more honourable and less "respectable" sentiments; and when the model Englishman shall be something better

Nabob, he may have preferred the maid to the man-servant.

Gezo ordered every Dahoman of note in the kingdom to present his daughters, of whom the most promising were chosen, and he kept the corps clear of the servile and the captive. Gelele, his son, causes every girl to be brought to him before marriage, and, if she pleases, he retains her in the palace: the only subjects exempt from this rule are the old English and French slaves at Whydah. These girls, being royal wives, cannot be touched without danger of death, they never leave their quarters unless preceded by a bell to drive men from the road, and all have slaves who act as spies. The sexes meet on the march and in the field: at parades, as has been shown, they are separated by the typical bamboo. A peculiar fetish, placed by the priests at the Agbo-dewe gate of the royal abode,[*] induces, by reason of the purity of the place, certain pregnancy[†] in the soldieress that sins. Instances have been known where

---

than a warm man of business, with a good ledger, and "the dean's daughter" to wife.

[*] Agbo (gate), dewe (search out, *viz.*, your fault). Some say that all the fetishes can discover the crime.

[†] Others believe that the fetish, like the bitter water of the Jews, causes bowel disease.

conscience has made the offender coward enough to sicken, to confess, and to doom her paramour, if not herself, to a cruel death. They have also a "pundonor." Like

> "That Mary Ambree
> Who marched so free,"

many an Amazon captured at Abeokuta* has refused to become a wife till the captor, weary of opposition, has killed the *acerba puella* as a useless animal.†

Of Gelele's Amazons about two-thirds are said to be maidens, a peculiar body in Africa, where—though 11,000 may have been buried at Cologne—no one expects to find the *integra puella*, much less the old maid.‡ The remaining third has been married. That

---

* This was written before the latest Dahoman attack, and when last off Lagos (May 9, 1864), I heard the same thing.

† Though opportunity, which makes the thief, is decidedly deficient, there have been, there are, and there ever will be, occasional scandals. As a rule, these fighting *célibataires* prefer the *morosa voluptas* of the schoolmen, and the peculiarities of the Tenth Muse.

‡ Dr. M'Leod sadly errs (pp. 51, 53) when saying "A mutinous wife or a vixen, sometimes the treasure and delight of an Englishman,—the enlivener of his fireside, and his safeguard from *ennui*,—is a phenomenon utterly unknown in Dahomy; that noble spirit which animates the happier dames in lands of liberty being here, alas! extinguished and destroyed." He is apparently somewhat a *farceur*, that doctor.

According to Mr. Duncan (Vol. I. p. 141), if a man commits adultery an element of desperation might not be wanting, women taken in adultery and liable to death, are dashed to the King and duly enlisted. Besides these criminals, the Xanthippes, who make men's eyes yellow are very properly put into the army, and Africa is well stocked with the noble army of martyrs that begins not with Socrates, and that ends not with Mr. Thomas Sayers.*

It is evident that such an organisation presents nought of novelty: the systematic organisation is more logical and less harmful than the volunteer furies who, as Abolitionists, urge men to ruin and death. The soldieress, at least, joins in the danger: this thing does not. David flying from Absalom left ten of his concubines to guard his palace at Jerusalem. The Greeks probably derived their Amazonian myth

---

with the wife of another, and the case is laid before the King, the offender is doomed to serve, so long as he is capable, in the capacity of a soldier, and when unfit for that service, he was generally offered as a sacrifice at one of the King's annual Customs; but the latter part of this cruel sentence has been abolished by the present King of Dahome (Gezo), who is much more merciful than his predecessors.

* Commander Forbes, wrongly, I believe, states, that the King gives Amazons in marriage to his warriors; he "dashes" his daughters and the palace slaves, but he keeps the fighteresses for himself. Commodore Wilmot (Appendix III.) asserts, that the King rarely takes the Amazons to wife; on the contrary, he has several children by them.

from exaggerated reports of the strength and valour of the Caucasian women. With respect to the visit of Thalestris, who desired issue by the conqueror of Asia (which Arrian has exploded), it is no more than what many a Bedawiyah will solicit from the traveller who in fair fight beats off her husband and brother. Amongst the Homerites of South Arabia it was a law for wives to revenge in battle the deaths of their husbands, and mothers their sons. The Suliote women rivalled the men in defending their homes against Osmanli invaders. The Damot or Abyssinian Amazons of Alvarez (1520) would not allow their spouses to fight, as the Jivaro helpmates of Southern America administer caudle to the sex that requires it the least. The native princes of India, especially those of Hyderabad in the Deccan, for centuries maintained a female guard of Urdu-begani,* whose courage and devotion were remarkable. Bodies of European fighting women are found in the celebrated "Female Crusade," organised in 1147 by order of St. Bernard. Temba-Ndumba, among the Jagas of southern intertropical Africa, according to old travellers, made her subjects rear and teach their female children war, but she was probably mad.* The Tawarik women rank with men like the women of Christianity, and transmit nobility to their children. Denham found the Fellatah wives fighting like males. According to Mr. Thompson (1823), the Mantati host that attacked old "Lattaku" was led by a ferocious giantess with one eye. M. D'Arnaud (1840) informs us that the King of Behr, on the Upper Nile, was guarded by a battalion of spear women, and that his male ministers never enter the palace, except when required to perform the melancholy duty of strangling their master. At present the Tien-Wang or Heavenly King of the Tae-pings, has 1000 she-soldiers.

---

* Urdu (a camp), begani (feminine of beg, a captain).

Sporadic heroines, like Tomyris and Penthesilea of the Axe, are found in every clime and in all ages, from Semiramis to the artilleryman's wife of Saragossa. Such were Judith and Candace; Kaulah the sister of Derar, and her friend Oserrah; the wife of Aban Ibn Saïb; Prefect Gregory's daughter; Joan of Arc; Margaret of

---

* In "Savage Africa," a book which has before been quoted, we read that this amiable Ethiopian pounded in a mortar her own male child to make an invulnerable ointment; that she resolved to turn the world into a desert, and did her best; and, finally, that waxing worse with years, she took a lover to her arms by night and dined off him next day. Of course this black Scourge of God was poisoned.

Anjou; Black Agnes; Jeanne Hachette; Begum Sombre; Kara Fatimah; Panna Maryan, and many

> "A bold virago stout and tall,
> As Joan of Arc, or English Moll"

—charmers far too numerous to specify. Many a fair form was found stark on the field of Waterloo. During the late Indian mutiny the Ranis were, as a rule, more manly than the Rajahs. And at present the Anglo-American States and Poland show women who, despite every discouragement, still prefer the military profession to all others.*

The regimen in which these women are compelled to live, doubtless increases their ferocity in fight. It is the essence of training every animal, from a game cock to a pugilist, and a married she-soldier would be useful only as a mother of men. Commander Forbes thus explains the action of forced celibacy: "The extreme exercise of one passion will generally obliterate the very sense of the others; the Amazons, whilst indulging in the excitement of the most fearful cruelties, forget the other desires of our fallen nature." But all the passions are sisters. I believe that bloodshed causes these women to remember, not to forget LOVE; at the same time that it gratifies the less barbarous, but, with barbarians, equally animal feeling. Seeing the host of women who find a morbid pleasure in attending the maimed and dying, I must think that it is a tribute paid to sexuality by those who object to the ordinary means.* Of course they are savage as wounded gorillas, more cruel far than their brethren in arms.

---

* On the other hand, the notorious Queen Zinga, or Jinga of Angola, as she is called by the old travellers, daughter of the king who died in 1640, kept, we are told, about her Court, fifty or sixty young men for amatory purposes, dressed and named like women, whilst she assumed the male dress and name; a touching tribute to the superiority of masculine human nature in the mind of the feminine. The Court of Loango offered a third anomaly, truly typical of the childish African brain. The Macouda, a female officer of high rank, cohabited with any man of her choice; the issue was accounted blood royal; and if her concubators were unfaithful, death was their penalty. A touching tribute to the superiority of the female in those regions.

In Dahome the woman is officially superior; but under other considerations, she still suffers from male arrogance. The King has repeatedly said to me, that a woman is still a woman. And when the Amazons boast that they are not women but men, they stand self-convicted of the fact, that however near to equality the sexes are, there is still always a somewhat of preponderance of the active over the passive half of humanity.

> "For men at most differ as heaven and earth;
> But women, worst and best, as heaven and hell."

---

* Instances of this organisation must occur to every man who has had a somewhat extended experience. I once knew an amateur nurse who was kindness personified to the sick man, and who, after curing him, always conceived to him a chronic aversion.

The existence of the Amazons is the second great evil of the empire. The first is, or rather was, a thirst for conquest, which, unlike the projections of civilised lands, impoverish and debilitate the country. The object of Dahoman wars and invasions has always been to lay waste and to destroy, not to aggrandise the empire by conquest and annexation. As the History puts it, the rulers have ever followed the example of Agaja, the second founder of the kingdom; aiming at conquest and at striking terror, rather than at accretion and consolidation. Hence there has been a decrease of population, with an increase of territory, which is, to nations, the surest road to ruin. In the present days the wars have dwindled to mere slave hunts—a fact which it is well to remember. The women troops, assumed to number 2500, should represent 7500 children; the waste of reproduction, and the necessary casualties of "service," in a region so depopulated, are as detrimental to the body politic as a proportional loss of blood would be to the frame personal. Thus the land is desert, and the raw material of all industry, man, is everywhere wanting. Finally, as regards the Amazons, nothing so outrageously insults manly pride in the adjoining nations than to find that the warriors who attacked them so stoutly are women—and some of them old women.

The dress, the *physique*, and the personal appearance of the Amazons, have repeatedly been described in these pages. I have also alluded to the organisation of the corps, which requires, however, more detail.

The soldieresses are not divided into regiments, as is supposed by Mr. Duncan. There are, however, in the "Household Brigade," three distinct divisions or commands, female as well as male.

The Fanti Company* takes the centre, and represents the King's body-guards. These women wear round the hair, which requires scanty confinement, narrow white fillets, with rude crocodiles of blue cloth sewn on to the band.†

The right wing, under the Gundeme, or she-Mingan, and the Khe-tun-gan, or female Gau. It is not distinguished by any peculiarity of costume.

The left wing, in charge of the Yewe or she-Meu and the Akpa-dume, who is the coadjutress of the Po-su.

---

* The Blue (Blú or Brú) Company corresponds, on the men's side, with the Fanti.

† The captainesses of the life-guards are, as has been said, Danh-ji-hun-to and Ji-bi-whe-ton. Those of Gezo were on the right Akutu, on the other side Humbagi. The captain of the present king's male lifeguards is Adan-men-nun-kon, of the late ruler Gulonun, which is said to mean "Tower musket."

The King generally pays "distinguished strangers" the compliment of placing them in command of his body-guard, which honour, however, does not entitle them even to inspect the corps. The "Bush-king" has also his captains both on the men's and on the women's sides. There are lifeguards and commanders for all the deceased sovereigns; moreover, every high official has his head war-man or war-woman, with a recognised title. The *cadre* of commissions, in fact, would become a country numbering twenty millions instead of some 150,000 souls.

These three corps * consist of five arms, under their several officers—

1. The Agbarya or blunderbuss-women, who may be considered the grenadiers. They are the biggest and strongest of the force, and each is accompanied by an attendant carrying ammunition. With the blunderbuss-women rank the Zo-hu-nun, or carbineers, the Gan'u-nlan, or Sure-to-kill Company, and the Achi, or bayoneteers.

---

* In the field, however, as has been said in Chapter VIII., the Dahoman army numbers four divisions.

2. The elephant huntresses, who are held to be the bravest. Of these women, twenty have been known to bring down, at one volley, with their rude appliances, seven animals out of a herd.

3. The Nyekplo-hen-to, or razor women, who seem to be simply an *épouvantail.*

4. The infantry, or line's-women, forming the staple of the force, from whom, as in France, the *élite* is drawn. They are armed with Tower muskets, and are well supplied with bad ammunition; bamboo fibre, for instance, being the only wadding. They have but little ball practice. They "manœuvre with the precision of a flock of sheep," and they are too light to stand a charge of the poorest troops in Europe. Personally, they are cleanly made, without much muscle; they are hard dancers, indefatigable singers, and, though affecting a military swagger, their faces are anything but ferocious—they are rather mild and unassuming in appearance. They fought with fury with Gezo before Abeokuta because there was a jealousy between them and their brother soldiers, and because they had been led for many years by that king to small but sure victory. They fled, however, with the rest, when a little perse-

verance would have retrieved the fortunes of the day.

5. The Go-hen-to,* or archeresses, who in Gezo's time were young girls—the parade corps, the pick of the army, and the pink of dancers. They were armed with the peculiar Dahoman bow,† a quiver of poisoned light cane shafts—mere birdbolts, with hooked heads, spiny as sticklebacks,—and a small knife lashed with a lanyard to the wrist. They were distinguished by scanty attire, by a tattoo extending to the knee, and by an ivory bracelet on the left arm. Their weapon has naturally fallen in public esteem. Under Gezo's son, they are never seen on parade; and when in the field they are used as scouts and porters; like our drummers and doolee-bearers, they also carry the wounded to the rear.‡

---

* Go (quiver), hen (hold), to (one that does). The bow is called Dápo, and the arrow Gá.

† It is not straight nor a segment of a circle, but partly both, the lower end being much less bulged than the upper horn, which, to protect the strain, is armed with iron rings. The Dahomans ignore the cross-bow, nor have they, like the Nagos and Makhis, an iron guard for the right hand fingers, or a leather on the left wrist. The only efficient poison comes from the Makhi country. Mr. Duncan (Vol. II., chapter 8) found poison in the Dassa mountains north of Dahome, and the arrow heads of superior manufacture.

‡ A man killed in battle is carried within the frontiers of Dahome

In 1863, I saw all these women troops marching, on service, out of Kana. The officers, distinguished by their white head-cloths, and by an esquiress-at-arms, generally a small slave girl, carrying the musket, led their commands. They were mostly remarkable for a stupendous stratopyga, and for a development of adipose tissue which suggested anything but ancient virginity—man does not readily believe in fat "old maids." I expected to see Penthesileas, Thalestrises, Dianas—lovely names! I saw old, ugly, and square-built frows, trudging "grumpily" along, with the face of "cook" after being much "knagg'd" by "the missus." The privates carried packs on cradles, like those of the male soldiery, containing their bed-mats, clothes, and food for a week or a fortnight, mostly toasted grains and bean-cake, hot with peppers. Cartridge-pouches of two different shapes were girt round their waists, and slung to their sides were water-gourds, fetish-sacks, bullet-wallets, powder-calabashes, fans, little cutlasses, wooden pipe-cases enveloped in

---

and buried in his fatherland. The Yoruba custom of "Ettá" prevails here to a certain extent. When a traveller dies at a distance from home, his companions must bring back for sepulture clippings of his hair and nails.

leather tobacco-bags, flint, steel, and tinder,* and Lilliputian stools, with three or four legs, cut out of single blocks. Their weapons were slung, and behind their backs dangled their hats, scarecrow felts, "extinguishers" of white cotton useful as *sacs de nuit,* umbrellas of plaited palm-leaf, and low-crowned broad-brimmed home-made straws, covered with baft more or less blue.

After a careful computation in 1863, I obtained the following results :—Before ten A.M. were counted 1,439, mostly weaponed; they then marched in knots, in all 246 ; making, when we retired to breakfast, a total of 1685. The movement was interrupted till our return, when the King set out with a body guard of 353. Thus the grand total was 2038, and at most, allowing for omissions, 2500. But of these one-third were unarmed, or half-armed, leaving the fighting women at a figure of 1700. Mr. Bernasko and others, who exaggerate the consequence of the country, asserted that, this being a small campaign, a large corps of Amazons remained at Agbome, but I subsequently ascertained that such was not the case.† Mr. Duncan (1845) reckons

---

* Called Dekiya, and made of scrapings of palm-trunk mixed with a charcoal, known as Addisin, and sold in every market.

† When the King sets out upon a campaign, he carries with him even

6000 women soldiers (in Vol. I. p. 227), and 8000 Amazons (Vol. I. p. 231). Commander Forbes and Mr. Beecroft (1849—1850) give 5000, but the heroines, like the commissariat cattle in Afghanistan, were marched out of one gate and in through another.* M. Wallon (1856—1858), besides dreaming of twenty to twenty-five howitzers, carronades, and bronze mortars on campaigning beds, assumed the number to be 5000 ; but his figures are all seen through a magnifying medium.† Mr. Enschott (1862), after inventing a park of artillery, furnished Dahome with 10,000 Amazons, which Commodore Wilmot (1863) reduced to a half. The fact is, these " most illustrious viragos " are now a mere handful. King Gezo lost the flower of his force under the walls of Abeokuta, and the loss has never been made good.

---

the hammock-bearers of his European visitors, and the fishermen of Whydah, who are like the butchers and bakers of an English town. Moreover, all the runaways are sent up in irons to the capital.

* This trick is not beyond the African brain. Captain John Adams (Remarks on the Country from Cape Palmas to the River Congo: London; Whittaker & Co., 1823,) mentions a French officer who easily detected it when the army of the King of "Hio" (Oyo) was marched past him. It was usually numbered at 100,000, the majority being cavalry; and for centuries it has been the terror of the southern country.

† That officer makes the Dahoman kingdom to contain 800,000 to 900,000 souls. He gives Whydah, 20,000 to 25,000; Allada, 15,000 to 18,000; Agbome, 30,000; and the Dahoman army, 25,000 to 30,000.

If the feminine force of Dahome is poor, the male is poorer far. The History asserts, that "fear never enters the Dahoman mind;" but that race has been long extinct, and Nagos, slaves, and mongrels occupy its place.* The women are as brave as, if not braver than, their brethren in arms, who certainly do not shine in that department of manliness.† Except a few guards, the *huissiers* of the palace, there are absolutely no regulars; all are military men—even the singers, the hunchbacks, and the eunuchs; they live in the town, and they are a mere militia, trading and mechanical bourgeois and slaves. Dr. M'Leod (1803) describes the 5000 to 6000 men whom he saw bivouacking near Grigwee (Whydah) as a "wild-looking group, and armed in the most irregular manner, some with muskets, others with swords, spears, and clubs." I inspected them when setting out in 1863. Of the soldiers, about one-third was armed with swords and Tower muskets, or more generally with cheap trade guns; the others were serviles, used for carriage; some had the artless bow, many carried only a knife or a war-club; and all were provided with the inevitable rope to secure "chattels." I need hardly repeat that the object of a Dahoman war is to capture, not to kill. It was not easy to form an estimate of their numbers, but, reckoning all hands, 15,000 men, and certainly not more, might have passed through Kana.* This would leave, at the end of a week's march, 8000, and a maximum of 9000, both sexes and all arms included; and these are the numbers that are estimated, by English officers who afterwards visited their deserted camps, to have been "out" when attacking the towns of Ishagga (1862), Igbara (1863), and Abeokuta (1864).

---

* Commander Forbes rightly stated this in Vol. I. p. 19. "Strange and contradictory as it may sound, this great nation is no nation, but a banditti, and there are few pure Dahomans." Even the local papers remarked the fact during the last attack.

† I have heard much of the English West India regiments and the negro corps of the Northern Union. But the testimony of white men under fire with them, and, one of the best criterions of the soldier's efficiency, the list of officers killed and wounded in the few skirmishes which have taken place during my service on the West African coast (1860-64), convince me that they are worth even less than sepoys. All men "well trained, well treated, well led, and well supported," will of course fight; but the Jamaicans and the West Africans will behave perhaps the worst. I by no means include with them the Hausas, the Mandengas, and other Moslem races, a material from which tolerable and even good soldiers, as blacks, can be made.

---

* Mr. T. B. Freeman (1842) set down the number at 65,000. The official figure of King Gezo's army when he attacked Abeokuta (1851) and that which will be adopted in history, is 16,000 Dohamans; viz. 10,000 men, and the rest women, against 8000 Egbas. For the whim of truth the numbers should be inverted; but this would rob the "deliverance" of its "providential" element.

The reader will see that I differ totally from Mr. Duncan*—"After all I have seen of Africa, I believe the King of Dahomey possesses an army superior to any sovereign west of the Great Desert;" and from M. Wallon: "L'armée de Dahomy est donc suffisamment aguerrie et assez forte pour lutter avec avantage sur son terrain même avec des troupes disciplinées, extenuées par de longues marches, par le climat et dépourvues d'artillerie." And when Commodore Wilmot declares that "they (the Amazons) would prove formidable enemies with good weapons, if they possessed discipline and real courage," it is equivalent to saying that they would be good soldiers if they were good soldiers.

The capture of Abeokuta, and the massacre of its population, have ever been, since Commander Forbes' time, the pet theme of Dahoman bard and warrior, and the King's daily thought and nightly dream. To those who know anything of the subject, it is evident that the capital of Egba-land will, like threatened folks, live long. Gelele has twice attempted to retrieve his father's honour, but he and his troops have never dared to cross the Ogun River, in fact to sight the city. This year will be the third attack, and if it prove a failure he will not try another assault for many a long day.

---

* Vol. I. p. 240.

Thus Dahome steadily loses *prestige.* Weakened by traditional policy, by a continual issue of blood, and by the arbitrary measures of her king,* and demoralised by an export slave trade, by close connection with Europeans, and by frequent failure, this breed of black Spartans is rapidly falling into decay. The Abeokutans, far from feeling their old terror of the King, now openly boast that they will "whip" the man who attacked them with women. Had the capital of Egbaland not engaged in a four years' war with Ibadan, the Lord of the Amazons would not have retired in safety from Ishagga and Igbara. At present, the Egbas, shut up within their walls, are afraid to take the initiative; but some day the King's pet prophet will lead him to measures involving the loss of his army, and possibly of his life.†

---

* It is said that Gelele has resolved to grind the faces of his subjects for ten years, of which six are now elapsed. After that time they will be applied to honest labour, and a man shall live on a cowrie a day, so cheap will provisions become. He thus inverts the Quinquennium Neronis, and however allegiant may be his people, he will probably carry severity too far. But lately forty families have fled in a batch to "Porto Novo" as a land of liberty, and they will be followed by others.

† These remarks were written at Agbome, in January, 1863, six weeks before the King's utter failure at Abeokuta.

CHAPTER XVI.

ADDO-KPON, THE BUSH KING'S SO-SIN CUSTOMS.

SECTION A.

Of Addo-kpon, the Bush King.

ONE of the Dahoman monarch's peculiarities is, that he is double; not merely binonymous, nor dual, like the spiritual Mikado and the temporal Tycoon of Japan, but two in one. Gelele, for instance, is King of the city, Addo-kpon[*] of the "bush;" that is to say, of the farmer folk and the country as opposed to the city. So the late Gezo's *alter ego* was Ga-kpwe.[†] This country ruler has his official mother, the Danh-li-ke; his Min-gan, or chief executioner the Wimekho; and his Meu, or master of ceremonies, the Awesu, father of the Whydah Yevo-gan. His palace is at Akpwe-ho, a village on the road to Aja, about six miles to the south-west of Agbome; as it is still built of matting and will not be made of swish until Abeokuta is taken, I was not permitted to see it. The house is furnished with male and female officers, eunuchs, and wives, besides which, criminals and victims* are set apart at the Customs. Thus Dahome has two points of interest to the ethnologist—the distinct precedence of women, and the double king.

---

[*] Addo (the light yellow Popo bead, which does not melt in the fire), kpon (see!). It must not be confounded with Adda-kpun or oyster.

[†] Ga (market-day), kpwe (when it comes, *scil.*, it must be full).

Our travellers are wholly silent upon the subject of this strange organisation.† I presume that the duplicate was invented of late years to enable the King to trade like that Farmer Monarch—

> "Who rams and cows and lambs and bullocks fed."

Sinmenkpen (Adahoonzou II.) first assumed the direct monopoly of commerce which his forefathers had held ignoble, but his successors dropped it. It cannot be now said of the Dahomans—

> "They have a king who buys and sells,"

---

* Some said that the palace shed was the King's victim depôt, the market shed, Addo-kpon's: others confined the King's especial sacrifices to the turret of the market-shed. Many men declared that the King's sacrifices were all captives, Addo-kpon's all criminals; more denied these distinctions.

† Mr. Bernasko (Appendix III.) mentions "Athopon," which he erroneously translates "hearth, a place in which a fire is made." All other books ignore the bush king's existence.

and yet Addo-kpon derives all the advantages of the industry of the palace, in which many things, as pottery, pipes, mats, and clothes, are manufactured and monopolized.

SECTION B.

The Nun-kpon 'gbe Addo-kpon-ton,[*] *or First Day of the Bush King's So-sin Customs.*

On Monday, January 4th, 1864, we resumed the labours of "pleasure," without which, some one has truly said, life would be very endurable.

At 2 P.M. we passed through the city gate, where we were disgusted by seeing the corpses still sitting and suspended. It was a hideous spectacle, the Turkey buzzards picking at——but I will spare the reader's feelings: suffice it to say, even our hanging in chains was not more barbarous.

We were somewhat late: as the parasol showed, royalty had already taken its station. Whilst bowing to the King, we were informed that he wished us again to "fight for cowries," and, like himself, to dance before the people. I excused ourselves rather to see how he would treat the matter; peeled finger-tips and a sprained *annularis* on a previous occasion had interfered with my writing, about which he was most anxious; moreover, the drivers had again ousted us, thus spoiling another night's rest. The ministers made the usual difficulty about delivering the message, but an answer came back at once. The King knew that white men do not "wrestle for shells," but that having admired my "bravery" and cunning—I had rolled the Reverend over—he was desirous of seeing it again. Under the circumstances, however, I must not fight, but receive cowries from him at once. As regards the dancing, he had promised to show the lieges his white friend's performance, and he hoped that they might not be disappointed. What answer could be made to a reply so amiable?

---

[*] Nun (thing, custom) kpon (we look at) 'gbe (to-day), and Addo-kpon-ton (belonging to Addo-kpon).

We found a small concourse of people, and about two dozen men were kneeling before an equal number of baskets containing cowries. The subject of the palaver was the eternal Abeokuta. Adan-men-nun-kon came to me, and in a loud tone declared that I had fought well for cowries, and was a strong man, like my company, the Blues. Whereupon the King called me up to the bamboos, and with *force complimens* presented me with two heads, which I carried off amidst the applause of the people. Mr. Cruikshank and the Reverend were similarly honoured. A little excitement was caused by two men being severally hustled off to prison, whilst the new Ajyaho stood up and explained their offence. They began life as common soldiers, and had risen to be captains. Receiving on this occasion no cowries, they had sent three impertinent reminders by the chief ministers to say that they were in the presence; whereas the King is the King, and does with his own what he wills. These men were greedy, and must be punished accordingly. After which Gelele dismissed the speakers for making too much noise. They carried off their cowries, the males "presenting arms" with muskets, the women with sticks and knives.

Then we had for three hours, without intermission, the usual Amazon dance and song, chorus and solo, with the whole *corps de ballet*, and several *pas de deux*, ending in *prestissimo* movements, very fatiguing. The King himself tapped a fast measure on a little tom-tom, and when his officers pointed out this to us, we rose and bowed, whilst those around presented arms, and royalty acknowledged the salutation with a small crooked stick. Gelele made a speech about Abeokuta, when the Bo-chio figures appeared for a short time, and the normal patrol, a band with skull-flags and drums, passed up the square.* The Amazons then sang the song of disgrace for those who would not fight, and a pair of Ursine dances concluded with a ferocious allocution by the Po-su. At the end of this scene the women knelt and clapped hands before Gezo's ghost.

Presently the caboceers approached the bamboos, and reclined on the ground whilst the King again addressed them. A favourite captain, the Toffa, had lately died, and another was to be promoted to his post. Some of the ministers had proposed one of the royal brothers as heir, but the King had replied, that although "Tanistry" may be lawful, it is still the will of Mau (God) that when the sire dies the son should inherit. Another Toffa was then elected, with the usual ceremonies.

---

* This patrol begins at dawn and lasts through the day and night. The African never yet invented an hour, but as the bands perform at nearly equal tri-horal periods, he is here seldom at a loss for finding his time.

From 6 A.M. to 8 A.M. is the Ahan-'é, mostly of bone rattles, followed till 11 A.M. by the Broh, rattles and drums. From 11 A.M. till noon is the Gan or Panigan, "gong-gongs," with heralds recapitulating the titles and exploits of all the Dahoman dynasty; this was established by the present king; Gezo ordered it only once a day, before dawn. From noon to 3 P.M. is the time of the Wimehun—cymbals and flutes, followed till sunset by the Goawe—mostly drums. From 6·30 P.M. till 9·30 to 10 P.M., the Agbaja, tom-tom, beats: the Kpwen, or horns, sound till midnight, relieved at 3 A.M. by the Akko: finally, the early gun, or "gong-gong," and the heralds' work begin at 3 A.M. and end at sunrise.

The bands consist generally of a man and four boys. They sit upon mats under a tree, before the palace gate, strike up at times, and accompany the soldiers of the patrol.

When nearly dark, we were dismissed. The hammock men rushed frantically past the place of execution to escape its terrible atmosphere.

SECTION C.

The Second Day of Addo-kpon, the Bush King's So-sin Customs.

We deferred our exit till 3 P.M. of January 5th, for the sun was terribly hot. On reaching the old place, we found three jesters professionally at work before the King: as might be expected, two of them were beating the third, who was pretending to cry. The Meu then gave a pair of bead necklaces to each of the chief ministers; who, after acknowledging the present, knelt before and solemnly saluted a large basketful of "Wo" pudding.

Presently began the drum-beat, known as "Gblo." At the further end of the square appeared about twenty men, three of whom had tails of some undistinguishable material ringed with black and yellow; these appendages were fastened to small square pads of red cloth, adorned with cowries, and the pincushion was girt round the waist over the loin-wrapper. They pranced up to us with the left leg forwards, bending slightly as they touched the ground, and a peculiar movement of the glutei made the tail which outtopped their heads revolve like a Catherine's wheel. They were loudly greeted by the people, and were presently joined by a volunteer with an irregular "fixing" of blue cloth; he elicited equal applause. After saluting the King, they disappeared. As has been shown, there is a similar female institution within the palace.*

---

* Mr. Norris well describes the dancing of the women: "Each had a long tail fixed to her rump, which seemed to be a slip of leopard skin sewed up and stuffed, which, by a dexterous wriggle of her hips, she whirled round like a string with surprising velocity. Mr. Duncan shows disapproval of the practice, but Mr. Duncan belonged to the respectable class, which "approves of" only its own practices. "Four tall men, singularly dressed, and with bullocks' tails tied so as to hang over their

There had been some question amongst us touching the proper signification of "Addo-kpon," which the Buko-no professed inability to explain. A message was sent by a Dakro woman to the King, who at once honoured me with a full account of it. I acknowledged this philological civility by returning "com'-liments."

We were then summoned before the throne. The old man Meu, who required perpetual prompting, addressed me with his childish treble in the usual loud and would-be startling tone, "Mashna," *i.e.* Commissioner. To this the official response is an equally vehement "Wé!—adsum."* He then presented me with a singer's Kpo-ga, or staff, and Mr. Cruikshank with another, somewhat less silvered. We bowed and retired, the weight of new honours pressing heavy on our shoulders. After sitting down, we were again summoned by the old Meu, who informed me that the King had been pleased to put me in the place of his

---

hips behind, arranged themselves in line in front of his Majesty, and by passing at the side step, lowering and poising the body by the bend of the knee, causing the tail to make a circular motion of a disgusting appearance." Why "*disgusting?*"

* So E! or Hé! in the Egba tongue, is a respectful acknowledgment, like Sir! or Madam! The Ffons sometimes say, Mi-se, we hear, i.e., understand.

Mingan, or chief executioner, whilst my companion was to perform before him as his Meu, or master of ceremonies. I was then invested with a Bonu-gan-jei, or "caboceer beads." This was a double necklace of 240 greenish beads, with eight cylinders of red coral; behind it hung a pigtail of sixteen cotton strings, the thread being spun by a woman on the right of the throne. The coral was sham, and the beads were poor imitation of the Popo article called "Ketu." Mr. Cruikshank and the Reverend were also presented with similar symbols of high dignity and African parsimoniousness.

The King had repeatedly fixed a day for me to dance before him, and had deferred the operation probably with the delicate motive of allowing me time to prepare myself for so great an event. Now, however, the hour had come. I collected my party in front of the semicircle of caboceers, gave time to the band, and performed a Hindostani *pas seul*, which elicited violent applause, especially from the King. My companion then danced a Dahoman dance with Governor Mark as fugleman, and his *disinvoltura* charmed the people. It was then the Reverend's turn to perform. He posted himself opposite the throne, placed upon another stool his instrument, a large flutina or concertina, and having preliminarily explained the "God-palaver,"* bravely intoned his favourite hymns. They were, Matthias (words by the excellent Dr. Watts, and singularly out of place in Agbome), Arnold's Job, with a refrain (making *more* rhyme to *endure*), and Martin Luther's "Old Hundredth" (opening with "All people that on earth *do* dwell"). How is it that the Wesleyan mind cannot forego its fondness for this Ennian literature? The people stared and chuckled a little, but—

> Omnibus hoc vitium est cantoribus, inter amicos,
> Ut nunquam inducant animum cantare rogati,
> Injussi nunquam desistant.

The Reverend being in his pulpit, so to speak, gave his listeners a good half hour of edification.

When the instrument was mute, the King proposed a modification. The Reverend was to play and sing, whilst Mr. Cruikshank and I must dance as before on both sides.† It was almost too ridiculous, but we complied for a short time. My second *pas seul*, which ended the affair, was greeted with firing guns and presenting arms by all my company, men and women, especially the latter, to whom the salutation had been especially directed. It required some strength of mind to prevent holding oneself a manner of prodigy; the people evidently thought the power of dancing, of using a sword, of learning enough to understand them in a month, of writing down everything seen so as to recall it to their memories, and of sketching objects so that even they could recognise them, to be an avatar of intellect.

---

* So in the History (p. 131), Mr. Norris fixed the barrel of the chamber-organ to the *hundred and fourth* psalm, at the request, and for the future amusement of his host, "Bossa Ahadi."

† Mr. Duncan (Vol. I. p. 255) found it rather a difficult task to dance and to play that "ancient Israelitish instrument"—the Jew's harp—at the same time.

We then retired to a little distance, and sat aligned fronting the King, whilst all the caboceers, in tumultuous throng, danced around us with loud songs and cries of praise and congratulation. The parson then intoned in "quick metre," despite the singing master,*

"O, let us be joyful, joyful, joyful,
When we meet to part no more"

—an injunction involving consequences possibly even more lugubrious than that truly abominable (to the

---

* Who informs us that "when this air is sung quick throughout, it is converted into an exceedingly vulgar jig-tune."

African traveller at least) description of future bliss in a land where there is

> "No veiled sun, no clouded sky,
> But sacred, high, eternal noon."

Thus the Reverend acquired the title of "Missionary Governor."* We then withdrew our chairs to the south-eastern corner of the square, and sat there till dark watching the circumambulation of the King's women. It was the same scene as on New Year's Day, and it ended our immediate labours in the presence. Again the vultures spotted the large tree before the palace gate. Surely they must have a sense of "time" telling them when to expect a feast. For to-night is a second Zan Nyanyana, a Nox Iræ, when Gelele, as Addo-kpon, will slay the remainder of his criminals and victims.

Our dancing had so excited the multitude, that we had hardly dined before an irruption of friends by the score, all wishing to learn "white man's fashion," crowded the house; and to increase confusion, arrived the outward-bound mail-bag, bringing its usual amount of care and excitement—such a contrast with the ataraxy and the *comme il faut* calm that characterise the more refined Anglo-Tropical mind. I thanked my star for sending me to Dahome, and did not "endorse" the sentiment—

---

* Yewe (god), nun (side), hun-to (drummer, ship captain, governor).

> "Oh! la belle chose que la poste."

SECTION D.

The Be-du-'gbe,[*] *or Third Day of the Bush King's So-sin Customs.*

Operations began at 7 A.M., on January 6th, when the King sent us four baskets of akkara, or bean-cake yellow with palm-oil, and four pots of ahan-vo[†]—"red liquor," or native beer. His father brewed with maize, but being a Diomedes, holding himself superior to his sire, he employs for the purpose "white man's rice." The produce is rhubarb-coloured, subacid, anything but "bub," weak but wholesome and refreshing.

Our old host, of whose meddling propensities we had every day to complain, visited us at 8 A.M., when we knew that nothing would be done before noon, and authoritatively ordered us breakfastless to the palace, for which he was, of course, ejected. Formerly English strangers were lodged with the Meu, whom they found an intolerable stickler for etiquette. Thence they were transferred to the Buko-no, and now the King should be directed to build for them a private house; meanwhile lodging them with the Prince Chyudaton.

---

[*] Be (joy; others say, live thou!), du (eat), gbe (to-day, the Happy Day, because it ends the deadly part of Addo-kpon's Customs). It is also known as Bekpa-men 'gbe; meaning, Bekpa (mat-fence), men (in), 'gbe (to day; *subaudi*, we will go). Commander Forbes, whose names and "customs" are equally unintelligible, writes (Vol. II. p. 33) "Ek-bah-tong-ek-beh," and translates, "Display of the King's wealth."

[†] Ahan (any liquor), and vo (red). Ahan yevo, is "White man's liquor," meaning rum.

At 10 A.M., in no very placid state of mind, we made for the palace. The nine dead bodies had been removed after the fourth day of exhibition, and in their stead were eight others, whose limp limbs showed that they had lately met their doom. Four were hanging head downwards on single gallows; a pair, one above the other, was seated, in their rude San Benitos, on a rough scaffolding; and two were lying prone upon horizontal planks raised on poles twenty feet high, with their heads protruding from salt-bags of the common matting. We were again assured that all were criminals and captives, and that the two last mentioned had been thus grotesquely laid out for stealing the King's salt—which was probable. A little beyond the bodies, the top of a conical tent of crimson cloth, a smaller Tokpon, intended for the King's nightly lodging, protruded from a mat fence covered with sadly tattered cloths.

Instead of dismounting at the south-eastern angle of the palace, we rode behind our host—who, by-the-by, had declared that whilst he did not dismount we should*—to the thin-shadowed tree before the Komasi Gate. Then we were fronted, as usual, by a semicircle of men and boys; and sundry of the caboceers came to greet us with "mawnin'," "mawnin'."† One of them, the Gbe-wedo, wanted remedies for a bad Guinea-worm. A medical man visiting Agbome has no holiday; every twenty-four hours he will find a fresh but a feeless case; and if he wants "practice," he has only to provide himself with what drugs and instruments the limited dispensaries of the West African Coast allow. On the ground at each side of the palace entrance were four heads, recently removed; this time they were almost hidden behind little fences of grass. Thus the total number of deaths for Addo-kpon, the Bush King, were sixteen, whereas Akhosu Gelele, the City King, slew twenty-three; and a total of thirty-nine lives were forfeited during the So-sin Customs of Agbome, in 1863—64.

---

* He did not dismount, to show how high he was in the King's esteem, who allows this liberty to be taken by his subjects on the "Happy Day" only. He wished us to walk on foot, that the people might see that we were the slaves of the King.

† "Good morning." The people easily pick up a few words of foreign languages, which, however, they can never master.

At 10.45 A.M. we entered the palace, and found the larger Tokpon pitched and surrounded with white cloth. Few spectators had assembled, and the Ken-tin, or chief singer, occupied the centre of the yard, with nineteen men kneeling behind him in two rows. He wore thimble-horns, a crimson velvet cloak, like a caballero in the days of Gil Blas, and a scarlet loin-cloth; he held the insignia of his order, a silver-mounted sword, a bard's staff, and a large black horse-tail. As the ceremony, which was almost the same as the Display of the King's Poverty lengthily described on January 2nd, began earlier this day, the King entered at 11.45 A.M. He was habited in a toga of blue and yellow tartan, and a green velvet toque, with two horizontal stripes of silver lace; his principal ornament was a necklace of cut and stained glass set in Mosaic gold, and worth a few shillings. He came up, affably shook hands and snapped fingers with us, and told me to write down everything seen on that occasion —which I will not do. The whole affair was mean in the extreme. The ministers and captains, male and female, paraded as before; but this being the Bush King's fête, they were fewer in number, and not so richly attired as before. Baskets of cassava were as usual distributed to the crowd, and there was no want of provaunt in the palace—its only merit.

Before entering the yard, the King had sent a message to ask me if I had any objection in joining the display. My reply was, by no means, if he wished it, and would allow us to walk by ourselves under parasols, which are not permitted to the lieges. He freely consented, and with all ceremony we circumambulated, in uniform, and with our head-decorations and singer's staves, the palace-yard from left to right, and not regarding the throne as we passed the entrance. The bands of women in the pavilion, and of men outside, frantically greeted us with cries of *Yevo!*—the whites! After the third round we formed up in line and bowed to the King, who was sitting upon a raised daïs with a clear approach lined with bottles of liquor, calabashes of food, and the women of the palace. He took up a fine gold-laced Spanish broad-brim,* and sending out six flasks of Curaçoa and other liqueurs, pledged us all in turn.

The procession was succeeded by terribly lengthy speeches from the Adanejan and the Gan, who complimented Gelele upon having so worthily performed his Customs in the presence of white men. The addresses were concluded amidst loud exclamations of *Un 'so!* "I answer you," and *Yati!* meaning, in Fanti, "I have heard," the haranguers raising arms and forefingers. These people have certainly practised as much as any American politician the art of public speaking; they can talk for an hour without saying anything.

At 3.15 P.M. the "wealth" began to pass, and terribly slow was this part of the proceedings. The King attempted to lighten our labour by sending us liquor, water, fruits, and a Moslem sweetmeat called Du-du-kwia, an African imitation of the Arabian Halwa.† Baskets of provisions and cowries were brought in great numbers from the palace, and most of the caboceers had complicated dinners carried by their wives and slave girls. The smallest gift from the King was received with cries of "Wé!" This was well; the royal hand is looked to, not the value of what it out-deals. We were not provided with "pass rum" before darkness came on, and as we hurried housewards, the light railings along the road told us that the indefatigable King's labours had by no means ended. Firing of guns disturbed the night, gin and rum were distributed, and cowries were thrown; this we learned next morning, when a patient came with a finger badly bitten in the struggle.

---

* The old prints in the History, though mostly drawn from imagination, all show the King wearing one of these hats.

† A confection of sugar, milk, almonds, spices, &c.

SECTION E.

The E na-nyin hun,[*] *or Fourth Day of the Bush King's So-sin Customs.*

We listened to Hope's flattering tale about a holiday, but at 2.15 P.M., on January 7th, we were unexpectedly summoned to the palace. The Tokpon and the human heads had been removed from the entrance sides, nor was there any connecting splotch of blood. Eight men danced on the male side, the bamboos were then extended, when seven women, a small girl, and a mistress of ceremonies in the rear, began to perform. As the sun was sinking low, the King left his shed with a *peloton* of fifty wives, holding a singer's staff, and shaded by a red-and-green parasol; after adjusting his toga, he bowed to the tent occupied by his father's ghost. He sang to a male band, whilst the women joined in the chorus, and then he inverted the process. The gist of the chant was, that miserable are the sires of poor men who cannot honour them with offerings of wo-pudding and greens in silver-mounted calabashes, such as Gezo was now receiving. The sentiment was heard with the "khé" and the "Ububu" on both sides. Six women then joined the King in singing and dancing. After repeated performances to honour Gezo, Gelele presented us with half a loaf of sugar and a basket of salt, for which we returned thanks. The King presently sang in praise of his visitors, and danced repeated solos. When this ended, a general ballet of women tumultuously advanced amid numerous discharges of guns, lasting till darkness came on. Mr. Bernasko was then summoned to play "music" before royalty, but his sweet sounds were drowned in negro noise. At last silence was obtained, and the Meu, addressing us by our names, informed us that the morrow would be a day of rejoicing, when both Akhosu and Addo-kpon would fire guns to show that the days of mourning and punishment had gone by, and that all who had attended the Customs would be "passed" with presents. He also conveyed to us the royal wish that we should come early, as all ministers caught napping are heavily fined, and—the crafty oldster had served under three sovereigns—he privily warned his colleagues that the Englishman, being a "King's man," would be before them all, and thus get them into trouble. But they scoffed at him, and said, "These whites, before they can leave the house, must bathe, and dress, and drink tea; with them 'early' means after sunrise."

---

[*] E (he), na-nyin (will pass, i. e., release from duty of further attendance), hun (drum, viz. drummers and singers).

During the night, the old King's ghostly tent, the corpses, and both the So-sin sheds, were removed. The place looked charming as before:—Nature, serenely fair, wore upon her lovely face an ironical smile at what she had witnessed amongst her sons.*

---

* As we found from the gathering of the turkey-buzzards for a week afterwards, the corpses were thrown into the town moat, near the Komasi Palace; during the "Atto-year" their place is on the north of the enceinte. They are not disposed of, as Mr. Duncan says, "in a large

SECTION F.

The So-debwe[*]*—Fifth and Last Day of the So-sin Customs.*

I awoke my people at 4 A.M., on January 8th, and before 5 we were seated in front of the palace. Our old host had not slept that night, lest we should give him the slip, and we found but one minister, the Agbwejekun, waiting to receive us. The early gong-gong men, one with a brass bell, the other with a cymbal, apparently of silver, and both double instruments, were standing at the gate, striking first the long then the short tube, and reciting the "strong names" of the King and his ancestors. As each lingering caboceer appeared, we tolled a large bell, brought up from Whydah by Mr. Bernasko, and gave him a glass of gin, with the solemn promise of reporting him to royalty, who had been made aware by messenger of our arrival. All replied

---

pit, at a considerable distance from the town." In all cases their skulls, which here are prized as much as by the Anthropological Society of London, are subsequently removed, and are probably afterwards exhibited as the trophies of heroic deeds.

[*] Meaning "thunder to-day," so great will be the noise of musketry.

that great men do not sleep at night,* and with comical ruefulness resigned themselves to their fate.

The early morning at Agbome is full of beauty. As the "grandmother and grandchildren"† waxed faint in the south, a lovely roseate blush overspread the pale cheek of the eastern firmament, the earth's ruder forms were enveiled in soft gauzy blue, and the cool refreshing zephyr—

> "The sweet first breathings of the hour of prime."

—the "respiration of morn," as the Persians call it, made distant music amongst the tree-boughs.

At dawn about 200 male guards issued from the palace. The several companies, under their captains, take this duty by turns; they pass their nights in the Podoji, or yard, and by day they are relieved by the Amazons. During Customs time they are more numerous than usual. Each troop, as it passed us with flags and bands, halted and discharged guns and blunderbusses, which were responded to within the palace. The ministers also fired: they must be careful this day; if their weapons do not behave well, the King reprimands them publicly, and perhaps fines them.

---

* Great men are supposed to transact business at that time.

† The Gold Coast name of the Southern Cross.

At 6 A.M. we were conducted by the Meu to the palace gate, which was still closed. We were placed in front of all the ministers, whom we had outranked by early rising, and as they made obeisance, we salaamed to the Sublime Porte. We then turned to a band of drums and cymbals behind us, and, in company with the Meu and Chyudaton, we performed a little prancing in Dahoman style.

Shortly afterwards the large umbrellas were disposed under the King's shed, and at 7 A.M. Gelele, with a knot of she-soldiery, stalked under his parasol to his accustomed place. We were at once summoned, thanked, and complimented for having paid due honour to royalty—in this country punctuality is *not* the politeness of princes. Behind us the delinquent ministers lay on the ground backed by the "Don-pwe people," to whom in such cases all the caboceers are committed for punishment. The sole exceptions are the Min-gan and the Meu, who in case of delinquency are prevented from entering their homes.

The Buko-no then lengthily and eloquently related our exploit, and reported the Yevo-gan and Prince Chyudaton as in fault. They looked at me with a jocose deprecation, and covered their heads with dust, whilst the "Don-pwe" struck up a loud uproarious song, ending in a laughing chorus, to deride the late men. The fat Adanejan, unhappily for himself, joined us, and was added to the list; all laughed as he stretched out the hand of deprecation towards the "small young men." I then invoked for these offenders the royal pardon, especially mentioning the old Meu, whose warning had been neglected. The King, however, replied, that they were in the hands of justice, from which even he could not save them, and that they must sleep abroad and be fined in rum for preferring to his service the bed and the "kicksey-wicksey." Nothing could be said against this slight penalty, and I was pleased with the opportunity of proving to the ministers that in more important matters they might fight a losing battle.

The two captains who had been locked up for shameless asking now received formal pardon, which they acknowledged by a dust-bath. Adanejan was then made chief of the Ganchya drum, whose black head and brown body rendered it conspicuous amongst the women's band; he also, after removing his necklaces, vigorously shovelled up earth. The King sent to inform us that as it was too late to hear all the songs, he would at once "pass" the singers and drummers, and then dismiss us to breakfast. A bard, with official staff, then came forward and sang—

> Gezo was a forest in which wild beasts (viz. his subjects) dwelt
> securely,
> And now Gezo has left to his son that forest.

The performer presently retired, and with his brethren danced a round before the King.

The Blue and Fanti Companies thereupon received each a maiden flag of white croydon, which is to bear their honours when they shall have won them. The King sent to me a message that I must return in time for the next Customs; my reply was that in such matters everything depended upon orders from home. This elicited many flattering expressions, which ceased only when the Gau arose and swore with violent gesticulation that Abeokuta—the word wearies me!—must be taken this year, with a Kpwe-to,* or, as the Arabs say, with a Katl-am, or general massacre. The Commander-in-Chief then called me up, and we performed together a short *pas de deux*, with left shoulders forward, corresponding arm akimbo, and ditto leg in the air. The Adan-men-nun-kon seconded the prophecy, and the Mafro, an old caboceer, declared that when a wound is healed men see the scar, meaning that on my return I should find the Egba capital "broken," and her people captives.

---

* Kpwe (plenty), and tó (here, there, and everywhere; not to be confounded with tò, the world).

These speeches were mingled and concluded with singing, dancing, drumming, and all manner of interruptions. By way of varying the sameness, I gave a wine-glass of water instead of gin to a Klan or jester-soldier, who was making all laugh by counterfeiting, and well too, the dying agonies of a wounded man, by pretending to weep, and by uttering wild cries, with similar savage facetiæ. He carried it in triumph to his chief, without whose leave it could not be tasted; and presently a loud Yep! yep! yep! from the crowd,—so utterly different from the hearty English Ha! ha! ha! —proclaimed the success of the trick. The King, when informed of it, was abundantly amused, and the poor fool was told that he must be punished for taking the glass. I replied that a jester, who could not distinguish gin from water, deserved a mild discipline; and the fellow exclaimed ruefully, "Preserve me from drinking with *you*: you first give me the wrong stuff, and then you get me a whipping!"

The women presently danced, sang, and drummed, and the she-Gau sent to inform me that when a weight is too heavy for one, two may lift it; meaning that the Blue and Fanti Companies were sure of victory. The Ji-bi-whe-ton, or second in command of the latter, came out from the ranks and exclaimed, The Yevo (albus) has now heard us talk, he shall presently see our deeds. A fire for cooking must be made slowly,* not so when one would burn an enemy's town.

Meanwhile the ministers of both sexes had invested themselves in their long Hausa tobes of ceremony. The Dakros placed in their hands divers bundles of cloths, which were severally unfolded and held out horizontally by the dignitaries. The recipients were called up according to precedence of rank or merit; each shouted, "Wé!"—Adsum!—and rushed forwards with affected hurry, capering as in childish glee. They knelt down, with one hand on the head, whilst the ministers passed the cloth plaid-fashion over their right shoulders and under their left arms. They then returned and sat in batches. When the largesse was all distributed, the two Meus of both sexes again called out the names of those whom the King had honoured, and told them that they had "got pass." During the whole proceeding the women sang a chorus, and as each fresh cloth made its appearance they greeted it with the Khe-cry, and the men with loud Ububu. Followed dances on both sides of the bamboos.

---

* Cuisinely considered, I believe this axiom to be distinctly incorrect.

Meanwhile the King's smoker stood up before the throne. He was a black youth, in an ochre-stained kilt, with a pigtail of sombre-coloured cotton, and he used a long stem ending in a bowl as big as a cocoa-nut. The office is one of the true African fantasticals, and the favoured man is supplied from the royal pouch.

It was then our turn. When summoned, I went up hurriedly, according to "etiquette": it was past 8 A.M., and the sun was fierce, but the King could not alter the custom and direct me to wear a hat. After being addressed by the Meu, I was invested with a handsome cloth, of palace manufacture—green, red, and yellow cotton; by formula it is called a "counterpane," and the King tells the presentee that it is meant for his bed.* Mr. Cruikshank and the Reverend, the boy

---

* The custom of presenting a "fine striped cotton cloth," is found in the History (p. 146), and the "counterpane" is also named.

Tom, and the Buko-no, were similarly honoured. After half-an-hour's candidature for sun-stroke, we bowed our thanks and retreated.

A small party of archers from the Agoni, or northern country, near Makhi, then knelt before the King and dusted themselves. These bush-men also boasted of the aid they would render to the army when attacking Egba-land. Suddenly, as usual, there was a stir. We hurriedly arose and went to the usual shed, where we sat, whilst the palace-women, carrying cowries and rum-bottles, thrice circumambulated the square. When the precious burdens were deposited before the throne we returned to our umbrellas, and the King dispensed with the ceremony of crying out our names and singing whilst we received his gifts. We were presented with twenty heads* and as many plates of cowries, with ten bottles of rum from Gelele, to which the mysterious Addo-kpon added an equal quantity. I then was paid five heads for dancing—my first fee of the kind,—and my companion's salary was similar. Finally, two decanters of rum announced the happy moment of dismissal. It was already 11 A.M., but "indecent haste" was forbidden; we followed, at a funereal pace, the boys who had been seized by the neck to carry the King's costly gifts, and no short cuts through the town were permitted by our conductor, So-kun, the "English guide." On the road we were informed that these were not the grand presents—which of course will never come—and consequently that they must be shared with the chief officers. About noon, after a *séance* of seven hours, we were able to break our fast.

---

* Or forty shillings. There are always fifty strings of two score shells to the vulgar, and ten less to the royal, "head." Moreover, the strings are "shroffed," or "cabbaged," by the palace women, and must be re-counted. According to the History, three to six were deducted as perquisites from a string of thirty-nine. In Captain Phillips' time (1694) the King of Whydah gave out cowries in a smaller, and received them in a larger, measure than any of his subjects.

It was past 3 P.M. when we were summoned to conclude the festivities of the day. We repaired to the Uhun-jro market-place, and we found pitched upon the spot, whence the red victim-shed had been removed, a Do-ho,* or little cloth pavilion, intended for the King. It resembled that under which he sat before the Komasi Gate; behind, and connecting it with it, was a mat-tent, for privacy; and in front had been planted a line of five umbrellas to shelter the Amazon officers.

---

* Do (a "bamboo" mat), and ho (a room). Some called it Kpla-kpla.

Shortly after we had taken our places on the north of the pavilion, two parties of Moslems, one numbering three, the other four turbans, passed before us. To the left, or southwards, the distance was filled with umbrellas and a dense dark crowd, whilst at times individuals and squads of fetisheers and warriors flitted about the Champ de Mars. The Harmattan wind presently began to blow with violence, raising the red dust from the sun-parched ground,—no pleasant preparation for those about to view a Dahoman advance in heavy marching order.

First appeared a line of scouts, bayoneteers, and blunderbuss-men, wearing a substitute for rifleman's green—in Europe an error, but here "no mistake." They were habited in kilts, or cap-à-pie suits of freshly-cut palm-leaf; some wore it like a *gloria* round the head, others had only the breast thatched, and the contrast of the verdure with the black skin was peculiar. This is an old custom of the empire. The "eyes of the force" were escorted by about 200 veterans, the remains of the Grande Armée that had found its Moscow at Abeokuta. They marched in open order like our light infantry skirmishers, and at times halted, knelt, and delivered fire, all the muzzles being of course raised too high. Finally they advanced tumultuously till they reached the northern extremity of the market-place, where they formed line about 500 yards from us.

Then came the royal escort, the main body of the little army, men and boys, about 500 strong. The King, who was in the centre of the battalia, rode a little nag, smoking his usual pipe. He had drawn with gunpowder* three broad lines upon his face, one straight from hair to nose, and two curved from ears to nostrils. Everything about him was in gloomiest war-style, the large umbrella was darkest indigo, the small parasol chocolate-brown. Unlike his war-men, he wore over a short white cloth a kilt of cotton stuff, scolloped at the edge, and darkened with goat's clotted blood and various barks; it was dotted with charms, triangles of darker material, and small feathers protruding from bits of cane. A bronze-coloured fillet encircled his head, and its long ends fell upon his right and left shoulders; from his neck depended a short horsetail fly-flapper, whilst two of larger size, white and black, hung from his sinister side. Through his belt was stuck a short Dahoman *briquet,* and over his shoulder was a crooked club, spiked at the top, and armed along the point of percussion with a line of large square-headed nails. He wore sandals, and anklets of cowries and black seeds: altogether he looked like "business."

---

* Not with a charcoal-blackened face, as declared by M. Jules Gérard, Appendix III.

As we arose and mutually bowed, the King descended, and fired from the hip five guns and carbines, very lightly loaded. He then remounted, and made the three customary rounds of the market-place, followed by a few "salvagemen" in green, fourteen standards, one pink and six white umbrellas, the show-shields, and the skull-drums. The rear-guard consisted of 100 men, accompanying the shabby umbrellas, which here denote soldiery; at times they skirmished in European fashion, with a fire pretty well *nourri.* After the third turn an order, sent to it by means of messengers, who ran bawling along the noisy chattering line, converted the rear into a van, which retired in turn, fraying out in a line of light troops. The King then marched down to the south side of the market-place, where his parasol showed him to be sitting amongst the women soldiery.

A fetish company of men and boys presently passed us at a run, carrying implements of their craft, huge cressets, crescents of iron hung with cowries, and various images, idols, and *simulacres*, chiefly of the Bo-fetish—a crucified turkey-buzzard of wood with red dots on a white body, another spotted animal encoiled by a snake, and sundry things undescribable. This party also formed up with the veterans, at the northern end of the Uhun-jro space.

It was now the Amazons' turn to advance, and they came up in better style as regards marching and firing than their brother soldiers. They passed us with a *feu d'enfer*, and when the dust was not flying the smoke hung like a pall upon the ground. The King was followed by unarmed wives, who were fanning their lord and carrying a few weapons for his proper use. The soldiery wore tunics of grey baft, stained brown with blood and barks, covering the bosom and extending to the knees like the men, short drawers, and white sashes hanging to the right. The King dismounted, danced to an "Amazon" band, and again rode thrice round the market-place, followed by his rear-guard singing and firing. After the third turn he walked up to where our umbrella was pitched, and discharging several carbines, he danced a simple morris, called

Hun-gan,* before a semicircle of armed women, who were chanting and cheering him lustily. After this, he took from one of his head fetishmen, a fine tall priest, with Abyssinian features, a crooked club, covered with blue and black cloth, and ringed with Indian cowries, and he performed another saltation. Then, holding my wrist, Gelele led me out, and we danced opposite each other amidst tempestuous applause. On this occasion the King expects strangers not to refuse him; I therefore had the honour of executing a very notable decapitating movement. Mr. Bernasko, as a "god-man," was excused, and a slight fever had detained Mr. Cruikshank at home; the performance, therefore, did not last long. The King, after dancing, turned round and drank from a small case-bottle, or decanter, with the usual noise and averting of faces on the part of his subjects. I observed that before putting it to his lips he allowed a few drops to fall upon the ground. This is not an oblation to the gods as in ancient Europe, but the offering to ancestors, especially to the paternal ghost, as made by the Chinese. Gelele showed me all his fetish sticks, requesting that they might be sketched, and presently retired to his little pavilion, where the scouts coated in grass danced before him. He continued his attentions by sending food and drink at short intervals, till we were surrounded by bottles and calabashes. One gourd contained pomegranates, poor in the extreme, half ripe, bitter, and preponderant in seed and rind. Another calabash, I was told, showed a specimen of his own war-food, bananas, excellent Akansan, powdered red pepper, in an Achatina shell, and a few pods of Malaguetta pepper,* which were greedily seized by the Reverend.

---

* Hun (drum), and gán (big). My ear can detect no difference between this adnoun and Gáu, a captain.

A massing and scattering of umbrellas far to our left told us that the caboceers were on the move; it was waxing late, and all was hurried. The chiefs were distinguished by the vast variety of charms and amulets hung about their arms, necks, and limbs, and some held a leaf of the Ayyan, or thunder fetish shrub, to prevent their guns bursting. These talismans are intended to create an artificial courage; all peoples having their own peculiar stimuli. The Englishman nerves himself by a sense of duty and hope of profit.

---

* Here called Attakun, whereas Attakín is Cayenne pepper. A present of this Guinea pepper from one soldier to another is considered an insult, hinting that the recipient requires something to heat his blood.

The Frenchman by visions of glory, and of late years by a bargain with Heaven that, if spared, he will believe in the Immaculate Conception. The German remembers the Rhine and its "ichor divine." The Russian thinks of a kind of visible demi-god; whilst in southern Europe the true fetish appears in the shape of the cross, the medal, and the relic. The braver Orientals, mostly Moslems, spur themselves by visions of Paradise, and by the prospect of escaping the "Squeeze of the Grave"; and the more cowardly Hindus and Chinese, regarding what is scandalously called Dutch courage, as the spur of heroism, "bhang themselves" accordingly. In many, if not in all, parts of Pagan Africa, the Congo for instance, the negro will not think of fighting without fetishes that will bring him safe out of battle; and even the less timid North American must propitiate imaginary supernatural powers before he sets out to "raise hair."

The caboceers, like their King, passed round three times.* As a rule, skirmishers, flags, and fetish pre-

---

* The following list of chiefs who appeared this day is banished to a foot-note :—

1. Advance guard representing royalty, 4 umbrellas, 40 men and boys escorting Agugun and Ayohi, custodians of the palace. 2. The

ceded the captain of the party, who walked or rode under his umbrella, whilst a full band and stragglers, all firing heavily, brought up the rear. Each group

three great ministers of the crown: a large chair, a parrot or fetish image and stick, 3 flags, fancy umbrella (lappets with knives and heads of many-coloured cloth), and 50 men were "the place" of the Min-gan, who was sick. 3. Seven deviced flags, 2 red and black shields, 2 big chairs, 1 blue striped umbrella accompanied the Meu, riding his white nag. Two large chairs, an English and a French flag, a pony, mats, calabashes, 4 men with boarding-pikes, attitudinizing an attack, a white umbrella, drums and band, with 4 deviced flags accompanying the Yevo-gan, who danced before us.

Then came Addo-kpon, the Bush King's "place," a heavy line of razor and musket-men preceding an unridden horse, 2 men and 2 umbrellas, with two flags.

Behind Addo-kpon marched the King's brothers and great dignitaries. 1. The new Ajyaho, preceded by fetish sticks of iron, followed by huge stools, 1 flag brown and tattered, 1 deviced, and 1 white and blue, a white umbrella, and an old brown ditto. 2. The Akpulogan, or governor of Ahada, whose escort was very mean, many of his men being absent on service: a head and knife flag, 2 white banners, a horse, and a big stool. 3. The So-gan, with a noisy band, and 1 umbrella, buff and deviced. 4. The Ganze, with similar escort: he is a young man, having been lately promoted. 5. The To-metti, with 2 flags, one white, the other white and blue, and some 50 men; he also has lately succeeded his father, who was one of Gezo's brothers. 6. The Afarigbe, own brother to Gelele; in his suite 5 men, with hair tightly bandaged in calico, like Fetishmen. 7. The Anlin-wa-nun, with an English flag, his party passing at the double. 8. The Tokpo, with knife and head umbrella. 9. The Bokovo, captain and brother to the late king. 10. The Adanejan, with a party of 150 men firing lustily, red flag and fancy banner, a horse, and in the rear 2 white umbrellas, 1 white pennon and 1 red. He sent compliments to us by one of his slaves, an Ishaggan captive, who looked the personification of mirth. 11. The Bin-wan-ton, with a small party, and umbrella knife and head. 12. The Bi-na-zon under a white umbrella, and a large numbered from 10 to 100 men and boys, and was separated by a short interval from its neighbours.

The ceremony much resembled that of the Entrance Day, but it was far more military; it was the march of the Dahoman army, whereas the other was the

party, amongst whom were sundry of the present king's young sons, who fired before us. 13. The Gwe-be-do, or second eunuch. 14. The Buko-no, or king's magician, attired *en militaire*—blue drawers, tunic with cowries on black ground, straw cap dyed red and supplied with chin-strap, and a small sword stuck in belt, and tomahawk in right hand. He asked me if I had ever seen such a gun (i.e., firing) at Abeokuta, and took place by my side. 15. The Attirive, brother to the late king, with 2 umbrellas, 1 white, and 1 head and knife. 16. The Aho, another of the blood-royal, followed by three of the princes; he had a blue umbrella, and a fancy blue flag. 17. The Voda, brother to the present king, with a white umbrella. 18. The Nonnovo, who is said to be a woman passing as a man, the eldest daughter of Gezo, and, but for the Salic law of Dahome, his heir to the kingdom. 19. The Tokunonfisan, captain and subject, with an English Union-Jack. 20. The Gofle, a son of the old Meu, also with British flag. 21. The Chyudaton, with a very small party. 22. The Kwenun, before an akhi-gan, or "king's merchant," now promoted to captaincy of all traders at Whydah. He is a large fat old man, grotesquely Silenus-like, but not unintelligent. 23. The Men-jo-ten, second caboceer of Ahada, with white umbrella and fancy. 24. The Asogba-hosen, brother to the present king, with a bluish umbrella, and a few attendants, chiefly boys. 25. The Awonyon, with a white umbrella, a fancy flag, an iron stick crescent-topped, and 2 fetish images, one of them black, with a long white unicorn-horn. 26. The Toja, a white umbrella, son to a brother of the late king. 27. The Ahopwe, brother of Gezo, with a head and knife umbrella. 28. The Assogba'u, with very few attendants. 29. The Enekpehun, another brother of Gezo, with a blue and white umbrella. 30. The Nuage, a brother of the present king. 31. Bosu-sau, on horseback, with white umbrella and bluish flag. 32. The Nuase, a triumphal return from war. As sunset approached, the gale increased. The King sent to say that, at a future and more favourable time, I should see another review, and then passed, surrounded by his "Amazons," to the north of the Komasi Palace. We waited till the ground was clear, and retired—not unwillingly.

The recreant ministers spent the night under sheds at the King's gate, being forbidden to enter their

---

knife and head umbrella. 33. The Metokal, a white umbrella. 34. The Vinyi-hun-to. 35. The Ajewanun, a French tri-color. 36. The Khwechiri, a Whydah captain. 37. The Nolufren, ditto. 38. The Mechonun. 39. The Bokpwe, a white flag. 40. The Ganzu. 41. The Adan-vokun. 42, 43. Two new captains, names unknown. 44. The Jogbwenun. 45. The Honjenun. 46. The Agbado.

In the *arrière* came the high military officers, preceded by their escorts, firing hard. 1. The Gau, with an awful flag, a crimson man sprawling on a white ground, a blue and white flag, and smaller blue pennons, a black stool, and a pair of blackened and tattered umbrellas. 2. The Matro, or second Gau, passing at a run, with two white umbrellas and 1 head and knife. 3. The Po-su, a white flag, with 2 pink and 1 buff umbrella. 4. The Ahwig-bamen, or assistant Po-su, with his band playing and his men firing, 1 white flag with green beasts eating one another, and 2 tattered umbrellas, one of them head and knife. 5. The Agbwi, with 2 white and 1 blue flag, and 2 white tattered umbrellas. 6. The Allohan, another tattered umbrella. 7. The Ahwesi, 1 plaid umbrella, and 4 white. 8. The Aovi, 1 white umbrella, and 8 flags preceding. 10. Very tattered umbrellas, showing where the servants of the King were. 11. Fetisheers, with Bo-chio images. 12. The royal "place," with 9 flags, 2 huge stools, 2 red and blue shields, 1 head and knife umbrella, and another striped, with blue lined valances.

Thus the total number of parties was 58.

homes. The punishments of high officials are here very capricious. Dr. M'Leod mentions a chief magistrate being ordered by the King "not to shave his beard, pare his nails, or wash himself for a certain number of moons, and in this dirty state to sit daily at the palace-gate several hours for public inspection." This exile continued till 5 p.m. of the next day (January 9th), when royalty was induced to relent by a storm of thunder and rain, the latter falling in peculiar spurts like jets of heavy drops. Agbwejekon, however, the only caboceer who did his duty, was temporarily rewarded with precedence, and was publicly presented with a fine cloth, a wife, and ten heads of cowries. Next time the chiefs will not be outwitted: they will pass the whole night in the square.

I will conclude this chapter with an account of the Dahoman campaign. The King marches in the midst of his host, surrounded by his Amazons. At the halt, a mat enclosure is made for him and them. The royal quarters, known by their superior size, are pitched far from the rest, and beyond danger of ambush. The males camp promiscuously in little huts. They move at all hours, generally by night, guided by captives kidnapped from the place about to be plundered; these men are disguised, tied up, and led in the rear; and after returning to the capital, they are released with presents. As may be imagined, not a few of them desert, to the great peril of the invader. A few soldiers, in the garb of traders, with cloth and tobacco, precede and accompany the force to attract stragglers, who are at once kidnapped. The army advances by circuitous ways, cutting its own roads through the bush; a favourite plan is to spread false reports about the intended direction, and to double round upon a town which has heard that the foe has passed onwards. Great circumspection is ordered when nearing the destination; no talking is allowed, though the soldiers may snap fingers; and even smoking is forbidden. The point of attack is secretly reconnoitered by a chosen spy during the day. They surround the fated place so cautiously, that it is often taken unawares; and they assault, as usual amongst barbarians, before dawn, with a rush, uttering hellish cries and yells. The only village defences are prickly plants, and these the troops are trained to despise. Any one appearing is at once decapitated;* when weapons are thrown down, the prisoners are tied up; their arms, however, are not pierced for cords, as asserted by the Egbas. As a rule, their object is to capture, not to kill; only the old, the sick, and the "unmerchantable" lose their heads, which serve as trophies. The chiefs are reserved for public sacrifice. When the town is broken, the conquerors raise in the centre a clay-heap, which is girt with dry palm-leaf; the wretched fugitives may, after returning to their ruined homes, place some of this material upon their necks, and appear before the King, who then spares their lives. The army, even if victorious, hurries back, after losing for every 100 prisoners some 200 of their own men by famine, fatigue, and privations, many of them self-inflicted. During the whole campaign, even if it last six months, the warriors may not remove their tunics for ablution. The marching-food is scanty and poor enough to cause scurvy, and a single calabash of water must often suffice for three days. We cannot wonder that the host is decimated by disease, especially by small-pox.

---

* Mr. Duncan, in more than one place (vol. i. pp. 233, 253, 261),

The present ruler has lately made a huge "gong-

---

declares that scalps are taken by the Dahomans. The custom appears to be now obsolete; I did not find a trace of it.

gong," a main tube or cone crowned with thirty-nine small bells, denoting the number of towns which he has broken. But all these towns would doubtless fit into a middling-sized English village. It is amusing to hear the wild boasts of the captains; one man has 40,000 followers, another thinks he has 16,000—remove the two or three last ciphers, and the remainder may be correct. On the other hand, it is curious to consider the inconsequence of those attacked, who, as I have said, after deliberately insulting and provoking a quarrel with the King, will make no preparations for war; in fact, will never think of the matter till they hear the death-cry at their doors, and they find themselves hurried to Agbome, where they will grace the next Customs.

In a previous volume,* I have described the warfare of the Egbas. It is pitiful enough, but that of the Dahomans is worse. There is nothing more contemptible than these negro slave-hunts: the "mild Hindu," as the Field of Paniput and many others may prove, has shown himself by far a better soldier than the West African. Individually, the Dahoman dares not desert upon the march, but he "malingers" readily, and he is so far from being brave that the idea of amputation makes him faint with fear. The decay of the old kingdom, and the deterioration of blood, are not to be mistaken.

---

* A Flying Visit to Abeokuta, chap. vii.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF THE DAHOMAN RELIGION.

I CANNOT but admire the incuriousness of so many travellers who have visited Dahome and have described its Customs without an attempt to master, or at least to explain, the faith that underlies them. Their excuses must be the difficulty presented by the incorporation of manifold elements, and the various obstacles to exploring a religion which every man, to a certain extent, makes up for himself. "Perhaps," said a Dahoman officer to Captain Snelgrave, the first European who visited his country (1627), "that God may be yours who has communicated so many extraordinary things to white men; but as that God has not been pleased to make himself known to us, we must be satisfied with this we worship;" and Captain Phillips truly remarks of the Whydah people, "In truth they have so many things they call fetishes that I could never understand the true meaning of the word."

· Fetishism, according to the older opinion, is, like the negro's personal conformation, a fall from the primitive inspired and spiritual belief of mankind. The researches of our modern day tend to establish the fact of a fossil ancestry of immeasurable inferiority to the present *Homo sapiens*, the effect of a selection ever active throughout a course of ages. Consequently anthropologists will substitute, even in the Hamite, a rise above instead of a fall from the philosophic Adam: they will consider his superstitions as the dawnings of belief struggling to attain the brightness of day, equally inferior in the moral or sentimental qualities to the Asiatic, and to the European in the reflectives and the perceptives.

Africans, as a rule, worship everything except the Creator. Yet there is, even amongst this people, a "*sensus numinis*" which raises them above the Andamanian "Minkopi," the Australasian races, and the idiots or imperfect brain formations amongst the higher families. I will not delay to inquire whether the Yoruban deity, confused and indigested as the idea is, has not been greatly modified by converse with El

Islam, or whether it was not derived from Christians driven southwards during the Vandal persecutions.

The Ffon name for the deity is Mau.[*] The Roman Catholic missioners have preferred to call themselves Mau-no or Mau-mother, as opposed to Vodun-no or fetish priest. On the other hand, Mau is the moon,[†] a distinct trace of Sabæanism; as the feminine principle, it made man in conjunction with Lisa or Se,—a male, the fetish representative of the sun, of which more hereafter.[‡] The Fanti or Wesleyan missionaries, who translate Mau as "all the gods," or "the unknown God," prefer Yewhe, or Ji-wule-ye-whe.[§] It is evident that, in the Dahoman mind, the *numen* has not had time to separate itself from material objects, or to vindicate its right to Latria as opposed to Dulia.

---

[*] So the popular saying, Azo ewadelo Mau na dokpwenuwe (If you walk and work, Mau thanks you, *i.e.*, God is of the man who works).

[†] Lisa-ji (lisa, or sun-sky) is the east, because the sun comes out of it. Mau-ji is the west, because the moon is supposed to begin there. Gbwe-ji (bush sky—also a fetish, which will be described) is the north, under which lies the interior forest. Hu-men (in the sea) is the south, for evident reasons.

A small oriole, which soars like a sky-lark, and strikes its wing-feathers together with a noise like the locusts' flight, is called Avo-kan 'gbe-khe—The bird that weaves cloth (for Mau).

[‡] Sé, which has been translated God and Spirit, means rather the Ekra of the Gold Coast, also written Okra or Okla, 'Kra or 'Kla—one that has the Umbra, or ghost of another.

[§] Meaning Ji (the sky), wule (glittering), ye (a shadow—any shadow), whe (the sun). The mulatto, the "tapoyer" of old travellers, is called in Ffon Ye-whe-vi, or Ye-whe-child, because he has no fetish. He is thus opposed to Vodun-vi, fetish child.

This Mau, or Ye-whe, is the Esquimaux "Pirksoma"—"he who is above"—an entity wholly undeveloped, and, for the same reason, the imperfect intellect of both races. Being incomprehensible, the Supreme is judged too elevated to care for the low estate of man; and consequently is neither feared nor loved. The sentiment almost universal amongst negro races corresponds with the views of many thinkers in modern or in ancient Europe, who look upon the Deity as the Cause of Causes and the Source of Law, rather than as a local and personal fact. It has, at least, saved the African from anthropomorphism—a besetting peculiarity of the Aryan race, whose hostility to a pure theism lingers, even at the present time, in that Semitic faith which has become the creed of modern Europe. Thus, so easily do extremes meet, and such is the radical identity of creeds, the negro's Deity, if disassociated from physical objects, would almost represent the idea of the philosopher.

It has been doubted whether, in the present state of human nature, a belief so abstract as Monotheism, asomatous and non-local, is a sufficient proof for the weakness of mankind. As there is in man a *besoin d'aimer*, so his veneration requires, they say, a Creator, whose image he is. The Athanasian looks upon deism as atheism, and holds all but a personal god no god or a useless god. In England the mind of Milton found comfort in a Father, who, unable to forgive the disobedience of his creatures, accepted the agony of a sinless Son; and he saw nothing irreverent in recording a divine dialogue of Arian and Calvinistic theology. Truly, says the Yoruban proverb, "The wisdom of this year will be as folly in another."

The African—somewhat like the vulgar Asiatic and European, especially the southron—holds the illogical belief that his dark, silent, eternal Deity can be influenced by intercessions animate and inanimate, human and bestial; that the leopard and the crocodile, like the wali (saint) and the prophet, and that the fetish shrub, like the Salagram, the Karbela clay, or the bit of True Cross, may, by some inexplicable process, control the inscrutable course of mundane law. These articles, however, must not be confounded, as they often are by Europeans, with the Platonic inferior deities. In some points they preserve a family resemblance with the old Gebr faith. Thus the latter had, for instance, Izad as angel or fetish for the sun, Mohr for the moon, Awa for water, Gowad for air, Amardad for trees, and Bahman for cattle.

In Africa the list of fetish or worshipped objects is nearly endless. Some powerful and indescribable influence residing in the elements, in beasts (mostly the destructive), and even in man (generally human benefactors), enables them to work present weal and woe, and wins for them propitiation or deprecation. The tendency of humanity to worship Nature and her powers extends from Pliny* to the American savage. It recognises as its temples, caverns, valleys, trees, and forests. The Yorubas, of whom it must be remembered the Dahomans are a family, have advanced from the adoration of the material object towards a personification of Nature's works, and these we consider idols or *simulacres*.† There is another idea which in these lands often makes and breaks gods. A man about to undertake a danger or a difficulty looks about as, according to the same Pliny, the Romans did, for some supernatural aid. He takes the first object, be it bird or beast, stock or stone, seen in the morning when leaving his house, and he makes it his Genius. If it prove useful, worship and sacrifice are not wanting: on the other hand, a stronger "medicine" is sought.

---

* (Lib. ii. chap. v.) Pliny, however probably believed in the Archeus of Nature, its original and all-pervading principle.

† Ydoles, according to the old writers, were human or bestial forms. "*Symulacres*," or *simileetes*, are defined by Maundeville, as "ymages made of lewed wille of man," as two-headed or four-armed figures.

In the days of Bosman (1700) the little kingdom of Whydah adored three orders of gods, each presiding, like the several officers of a prince, over its peculiar province.

The first is the Danh-gbwe, whose worship has been described.* This earthly serpent is esteemed the supreme bliss and general good: it has 1000 Danh'si or snake wives, married and single votaries, and its influence cannot be meddled with by the two following, which are subject to it.

The second is represented by lofty and beautiful trees,† "in the formation of which Dame Nature seems to have expressed her greatest art." They are prayed to and presented with offerings in times of sickness, and especially of fever. Those most revered are the Hun-'tin, or acanthaceous silk cotton (*Bombax*), whose wives equal those of the snake, and the Loko, the well-known

---

* Chapter IV.

† Atin, contracted to 'tin in Ffon, is any tree.

Edum, ordeal, or poison tree, of the West African coast. The latter numbers few Loko-'si, or Loko spouses: on the other hand, it has its own fetish pottery, which may be bought in every market. An inverted pipkin full of cullender holes is placed upon the ground at the tree foot, and by its side is a narrow-necked little pot into which the water offering is poured. The two are sometimes separated by a cresset-shaped fetish iron, planted in the earth. The *cultus arborum*, I need hardly say, is an old and far-spread worship: it may easily be understood, as the expression of man's gratitude and admiration. The sacred trees of the Hindu were the Pippala (*Ficus religiosa*), the Kushtha (*Costus speciosus*), the sacred juice of the Soma, which became a personage, and many others. The Jews, and after them the early Christians and the Moslems, had their Tuba or Tree of Paradise. Mr. Palgrave, traversing Arabia in 1862-63, found in the kingdom of Shomer or Haíl distinct tree worship, the acacia (Talh) being danced round and prayed to for rain. In Egypt and other Moslem lands rags and cloths are suspended to branches, vestiges of ancient Paganism. North European mythology embraced Yggdrasil, or the world tree. We no longer approach the gods with branches of this sacred vegetation in hand; still the Maypole and Christmas tree, the Yule log and the church decorations of evergreens, holly and palms, and the modern use of the sterility-curing mistletoe, descend directly from the treovve-ordung, or tree worship of ancient England. It is also curious that snake worship is generally connected with it: so in the North European system, Nidhoegg, the abyss-worm, lay coiled at the foot of Yggdrasil.

The youngest brother of the triad is Hu, the ocean or sea. Formerly it was subject to chastisement, like the Hellespont, if idle or useless. The Hu-no, or ocean priest, is now considered the highest of all, a fetish king, at Whydah, where he has 500 wives. At stated times he repairs to the beach, begs "Agbwe," the Samudra-devta or ocean god, not to be boisterous, and throws in rice and corn, oil and beans, cloth, cowries, and other valuables. He doubtless knows the rule mentioned by Captain Phillips, that the weather is better during the wane of the moon than at its full and change. At times the King sends as an ocean sacrifice from Agbome a man carried in a hammock, with the dress, the stool, and the umbrella of a caboceer; a canoe takes him out to sea, where he is thrown to the sharks. The Custom for this element is made at Whydah, in a place near the greater market, and called Hu-kpa-men. It is a round hut, with thatch and chalked walls; outside is a heap of bones, whilst skulls, carapaces of the tortoise, and similar materials, cumber the interior. The priest is a fetish woman, who offers water and Kola nuts to, and expects rum from, white visitors.

These deities, originally of Whydah, have spread throughout Dahome, and men now forget their first habitat. We may add a fourth, "So," or "Khevioso,"* the thunder fetish, whose weapon, as amongst our classics unlearned in brontology, is here still supposed to be Abi, the lightning.† This deity is worshipped at Whydah, in a So Agbajyí, or thunder closet. It has about 1000 wives throughout the country. When a man is killed by the electric fluid,‡ which renders sepulture, as amongst the Romans, unlawful, these women place the body upon a platform, and cut from it lumps, which they chew without eating, crying to passers-by—"We sell you meat!—fine meat! Come and buy!" This is the nearest approach to cannibalism shown in Dahome. I saw nothing of the blood-drinker described by Mr. Duncan, who, when offered a draught mixed with rum, "could, with a good heart, have sent a bullet through his head."

---

* This word is peculiarly Whydah, whence I judge the Dahoman fetish to have first adopted there from the Shango, or Jupiter Tonans of Yoruba.

† So we still say "thunderbolts." According to Barbot, on the Gold Coast (I have heard the same everywhere, from that place to Camaroons), "when it thunders they say the Deity—with reverence be it spoken—is diverting himself with his wives." The Anglo-African is, "Man for top, he play for bush." Others again say, "Great devil he talk angry." A common imprecation in Dahome is, So ye mi, "Thunder fall upon me, if," &c. &c.

‡ The corpse of a free man can be ransomed for ten heads, that of a slave never.

In the following general list I have preserved no other order than that dictated by my interpreters; the *Dii servatores* and *compitales*, *sospitatores* and *viales*, are all mixed.

1. Afa, as has been said,* is the messenger of fetishes and of deceased friends. Its fetisheer is here called Buko-no, and by the Egbas, Babbalawo. The people say of him, "The priest who is most cunning takes to Afa," meaning that it pays best; consequently, Buko-nos swarm throughout the land. When Afa predicts evil the votary must perform the catholicon—"Vo-sisa." Ground is cleared near the house or in the bush, a mat is then spread, and a short staff or thick peg is driven through the latter; the worshipper, with his fetishman,

---

* Chapter XIII.

who taps a small cymbal with an iron rod, pours upon the wood first water and then the blood of a fowl, whose body becomes, of course, the holy man's perquisite. As has appeared in the previous pages, there are many different forms of vo-sisa.

2. Bo, a huge Priapus built of clay, and placed in markets, at gates, and in rooms. He is the especial guardian of warriors, defending them from fire and sword; and in his honour they are hung with cowries and horsetails. The images called Bo-chio, the crutched stick, either planted in the ground at home or carried abroad, when travelling, and the Bo-so, "struppi," or bundles of truncheons painted and speckled, are sacred to this great fetish.

3. Legba, also a Priapus and a Janus, whose appearance and worship have been described.*

4. Gùn, or Gù, the iron fetish. It is the god Ogun of Abeokuta, where human sacrifices are offered to it. In Dahome it has not that honour.

5. Hoho, the twin fetish,† that protects those exceptionals. At Allada the birth was infamous, as men

---

* Chapter IV.

† Hoho-no is the mother, Hoho-vi the children. The Dahomans do not kill Albinos (here known as "men-wewe" or white bodies), of whom I saw several in the capital: all were of the normal leucous type.

would not believe that a woman could have two children by one husband; at Agbome, where population is wanted, the mother is honoured. So at the mouth of the Benin River the parent and offspring are put to death, and in the city of Great Benin the King makes presents to the progenitrix. Amongst the Fanti, the Attah is also respected, whereas in the Bonny River the twin-mother is called a "she goat," and is slain. The twin fetish has no wives, and its offerings of little pots and irons have been minutely described.*

6. Sapatan, or small pox, the Buku god of Abeokuta, and the Sitla Devi (small pox goddess) of the Hindu.†

7. Takpwonun, the hippopotamus.

8. Kpo, the leopard—a royal fetish.‡

9. Gbwe-ji, the great bush fetish, which helps huntsmen and foresters. It is in the shape of a small snake, marked like a boa.

---

* Chapter X.

† In the Dahoman vocabulary by Commander Forbes our "small-pox" is translated *Akpotin kpe-vi*, and explained in a foot-note, "A poh tee peh vee; literally, small a poh tee." But *Akpotin*, in the Whydah dialect is a *box*, not a *pox*—hence the mistake, which is but one in a thousand made in that vocabulary.

‡ In Dr. M'Leod's time it was confined to Dahome proper, "but they deem it the safest way of worship to perform their acts of devotion to his skin only, after death, which is stuffed for that purpose."

10. Kpate, the first Whydah man who, sighting a ship from his plantation, brought it to anchor by waving a cloth tied to a long pole, and led the captain into the town. Like Triptolemus, he is worshipped as a benefactor to mankind.

11. Kpase, the man who helped Kpate.

12. Nate, the storekeeper of the sea, who is worshipped by fishermen, and those who work by water.

13. Avrekete, a fetish which steals the keys from Nate and gives to man—hence he has some 500 wives.

14. Aizan, one of the many street gods which protect the market and the gate. It is a large or small cone of clay, with a pipkin or a stone on the top or at the base. Upon these are poured the consecrated trash—flour, palm-oil, and boiled beans; sometimes fowls are killed for it.

15. Agasun, the old Makhi fetish that ruled Agbome before Dako conquered it. It aided his enterprise, for which reason the Agasun-no, or head fetishman, is at the capital equivalent to the Hu-no of Whydah. Its emblem is not known. The abode of the great fetisheer, and the respect paid to him by the King and multitude, have been described.*

---

* Chapter X.

16. Li (pronounced with ळ, the peculiar Sanskrit *l*) was a great fetish at Whydah, in charge of the town before it was conquered by Agaja. The place of worship is a little shed in the bush to the west of Savi.

17. Lisa, the fetish of Khwezioso, the sun. Its emblem is a red clay pot, with a cover of the same material, striped white; on the top is a rude chamelion (agaman), that animal being the messenger of Lisa. It is placed upon a swish heap and filled with water. Sometimes meat and other food are offered to it.

18. Dohen, a Whydah fetish. It calls vessels and strangers to the English fort when that building is empty, consequently it is worshipped there. Goats and fowls are sacrificed to it, and beans are especially offered up.

19. Nesu, the proper Ffon fetish of Agbome, established by Agaja the Conqueror. It is worshipped in large sheds called Nesu-hwe, adjoining the various palaces. Its water pot is known as Bagwe, and when the fetish women, guarded by Amazons, pass in strings towards the wells, they are fetching the element for the mysterious rites of Nesu.

20. Ajaruma, the protecting fetish of white men at

Whydah. He also is represented in the English fort by a tree and a pot inside a room.

21. Tokpodun, the crocodile, formerly worshipped at Allada and Savi, where Captain Phillips was not allowed to shoot it. All are now killed off.

22. Zo, the fire fetish. A pot is placed in a room and sacrifice is offered to it, that fire may "live" there, and not go forth to destroy the house. The Zo-vodun has already been described.*

23. Aydo-whe-do,—commonly called Danh, the Heavenly Snake, which makes the Popo beads and confers wealth upon man,—is the rainbow. Its emblem is, I have said, a coiled and horned snake of clay, in a pot or calabash. This utensil, duly whitewashed, is placed at the foot of a silk-cotton tree, or near hills of white ants, which are called Danh's houses. The Dahomans do not, as the French missionaries suppose, adore insects.

Abeokuta has her *lares*.† Benin boasts a profusion of domestic altars, which are here unknown. The Dahomans practise, however, like all Yorubans, the worship of their own heads, in order to obtain good fortune.* They do not, however, honour, like the Egba traveller, their big toes.† The "head" worshipper, after providing a fowl, kola nuts, rum and water, bathes, dresses in pure white baft, and seats himself on a clean mat. An old woman with her *medius* finger-tip dipped in water, touches successively his forehead, poll, nape, and mid-breast—sometimes all his joints. She then breaks a kola into its natural divisions, throws them down like dice, chooses a lucky piece, which she causes a by-stander to chew, and with his saliva retouches the parts before alluded to. The fowl is then killed by pulling its body, the neck being held between the big and first toe; the same *attouchemens* are performed with its head, and finally with the boiled and shredded flesh, before it is eaten. Meanwhile, rum and water are drunk by those present. A quaint superstition!

---

* Chapter IV.

† The images or teraphim of Laban and Micah (Gen. xxxi. 19, 30; Judges xvii. 5).

The fetisheer is all powerful in Dahome. The last monarch was notably desirous of modifying the horrors and the expenses of the national worship; his son has been compelled to walk in the old path of blood. As has been said, the King dismounts at the Agasu-no's door, and prostrates to him; besides which, he is guided in all his movements by his Buko-no. When a grandee passes the house of a common priest, the latter comes to the entrance, pronounces an allocution in the unintelligible hierarchic tongue, whilst an acolyte shrieks a response to his recitative, and both expect largesse.

---

* So the Jews swore by their heads. The ceremony is called in Ffon, E (he), wa (makes), ta (or ta-kun, the head), nun (thing). The Egbas call it the "Olori li ori," or Good Genius of Head.

† In Ffon, "Afo-su;" in Egba, "Ikpori."

There are writers, Captain Adams for instance, who would treat all the ecclesiastical body in West Africa as mere impostors, which is much as if a Zulu, unable to master the subject of Christianity, were to accuse every European priest and parson of deliberate fraud. Fetish, moreover, is, throughout the dark continent, the strongest engine of government—a moral police—whose sudden removal would break up society.* In Dahome it gains strength from the peculiar form of tyranny; wherever despotism exists it must rest upon a strong and popular faith, and it will find in its ministrants the most persistent and conservative allies, as they are the most interested in repelling relaxation of discipline. A notable case may be seen nearer home. The French Republic was satisfied with a latitudinarianism of the amplest. The Napoleonic empire must conciliate, if it cannot win over, the *parti-prêtre.* But the polished despotism tempers the superstition and credulity of the ignorant many by the scepticism and the rationalism of the educated few. The barbarous tyranny admits only the thaumaturgic extreme. Amongst the turbulent Fanti there is considerable infidelity touching fetish and its priests; the Dahoman must believe and tremble.

---

* So it has been popularly said of M. Renan's views, that an immense revolution, and one which Christians never desire to see, would immediately follow their general reception.

Theological studies are strict in this section of Yoruba. The peculiar fetish is chosen after a fit of ecstasy: abnormal brain action is not uncommon amongst the negro races. During the fit the subject rushes, as one distracted, to the idol, and, after violent exertions, sinks fainting on the ground. When he recovers, the head-man informs him what fetish—the sea, for instance, or the snake—has come to him; and that he adopts for life. This ecstasy is the Hal (حال) of Arabia, the demoniacal possession of the Days of Ignorance, the "spirit of prophecy" amongst the Camisards or Shakers, the "spirit" in Methodism, and the "jerks" and "holy laughs" of the camp-meeting.

I have not seen it in Dahome, but old residents have described it to me—all in almost identical terms. In many points it resembles our modern spiritualism, which a late writer ("From Matter to Spirit") prefers to "fix upon some cause, even if false, than upon none."*

The neophyte is then removed from his friends to the fetish quarter of the town. There he learns the holy fetish jargon, which is unintelligible to the uninitiated: the technical phraseology and the professional twang—in fact, what John Foster calls "the vulgar of religious authorship"—are the only traces of this enlightened process still lingering in England. The course, which extends through two or three years, ends with the songs, the dances, and the multifarious ceremonies of the religious calling. The relatives then ransom the acolyte, by paying sundry heads of cowries and clothes, goats, and fowls to the principal; and the youth, gaudily dressed, is escorted home, where, for three months, he will not make himself understood. At Agbome there is an ordination. The aspirant is taken before the King, who invests him in a new cloth, changes his name,* and addresses him touching his future duties.

---

* Though objecting to the name, which involves a theory, it appears to me, after long inquiry, to be the action of an abnormal state of the brain, which renders it, to an unknown and as yet undefinable extent independent of the external senses. It is less powerful in the sanguine or lymphatic Englishman than in the peoples of Continental Europe; and is most remarkable in the highly nervous temperament of the Anglo-American.

Many fetisheers retain their secular callings. Those who have the "cure of souls" receive no regular pay, but live well upon the benevolences of votaries who desire health or wealth, issue, and length of days, to detect a wizard or to destroy a foe. Formerly they had as many *fueros* as a Mexican ecclesiastic, and were not liable to capital penalties. It was found advisable to alter the system, and to punish them under a legal fiction: whilst the fetish is "upon" the criminal, he is safe; when the fit has passed off, he is put to death.

Still, these fetisheers have many privileges. Both sexes, for instance, may wear dresses forbidden to the commonalty, and personal vanity in Africa emphatically knows no sore. The men shave half their heads or confine the hair in white calico: many also carry a chauri, or fly-flap, of horse or cow-tail. Their costume is arbitrary, parts of it having been borrowed, apparently, from the Portuguese priests at Whydah. The women, especially the wives of the small-pox god, are also "half-heads:" some decorate their hair with bunches of small East Indian cowries, beads, or bright flowers, others with the feathers of little red birds planted upright, so as to make them resemble horned owls; whilst others wear the Ta-bla, or broad-brimmed steeple-hats, with tall thin crowns, before described. There are many other *coiffures*—caps adorned, like the hair, with shells and bouquets, fillets, and so forth. They cover the bosom with kerchiefs; and gaudy-coloured cloths, extending to their feet, are girt round the waist, where the stuff turns over with a fall or narrow flap. Both sexes, especially the Mau or moon fetish-women, prefer, as ornaments, long strings of cowries doubled back to back, with a single black seed * separating the pairs. These are passed, baldric-like, over the shoulder, and hang down by the side. I have alluded to their other implements in the course of these pages.

---

* There are in Dahome no hereditary or heraldic surnames and sirenames like those of Europe. All are personal and significant; they are mostly given by the King, who often renews them. So in 2 Kings xxiii. 34, Pharaoh-nechoh turned the name of Eliakim, son of Josiah, to Jehoiakim. And lately, Napoleon I. made all his vassal brethren assume his first as the dynastic name.

---

* It is called Attikun, and is said to be produced by a tall tree growing at a distance from Agbome.

About a quarter of the female population in Dahome may be fetisheeresses, and girls are married to the fetish before their birth. These Vodun-vi* are trained like the men, and though but slaves, are greatly respected by the laity. How the sea-marriages and others are conducted, no one knows; scandals are, of course, rife, but who can substantiate them? The husband may not chastise or interfere with his wife whilst the fetish is "upon" her, and even at other times the use of the rod might be dangerous.† During the Customs these women pass the forenoon in begging cowries: about 4 P.M. they don their clerical habits at the fetish house, march in Indian file to the squares, where the public dances are performed, and so excite themselves by music and violent exercise that ecstatic fits are often induced. When the fête is over, they re-assume the laical garb and return home.

The most peculiar, and perhaps the least noticed, tenet of Dahoman religion is the "continuance theory," which was apparently raised to a doctrine by the sons of Misraim, and which the great Lawgiver of Israel almost expelled from his system. Of the Egyptians it was said that they lived in Hades rather than on the banks of the Nile: the Dahomans call this world their "plantation," and the next their "home." I am unable to decide whether it is a spontaneous idea, or whether it immigrated in olden times, as all Africa's poor arts and arms show a once general intercourse, from that neutral region between the Semite and the Hamite. We trace it throughout pagan Yoruba and the Gold Coast, and it shows no signs of a Christian or a Moslem origin. It is essentially prosaic, as among the vulgar of Europe. Former travellers vaguely allude to a rude notion of futurity in the native mind: perhaps the idea has since grown; possibly, the observer failed to break through native secretiveness.

---

* Vodun (fetish), vi (a child). The name is especially applied to children claimed by a fetish.

† The old travellers inform us, that in their days these ladies used to lord it over their lords to such an extent, that to espouse a sanctified woman was like marrying an heiress in civilised lands.

Ku-to-men, or Dead-land,* is the place which receives the "nidon," or ghostly part of man proceeding from him after death. This "next world" offers none of those rewards and punishment by which, according to the Semitic animist, the balance of good and evil in this life is to be struck. He who escapes punishment here, is safe hereafter; there the earthly king is a king, the slave a slave for ever and ever; the hunter and warrior shall continue their favourite pursuits, and all will busy themselves with the affairs of the living. When sunshine accompanies rain, the people say that the ghosts are going to market, and with us the devil beats his wife. It is impossible to determine whether the departed are looked upon in the light of our spirits, souls, ghosts, or pale shades wandering by the gloomy river: they are probably nothing but the embodiment of the animal horror of death. Consequently, Satan and other Semitic machinery are absolutely unknown. Ku-to-men is, in fact, a Swedenborgian reproduction of this world, and it is placed under the earth. Of course it has been visited as often as St. Patrick's "purgatory." Many men, falling ill,

---

* Ku (dead), to (land), men (in, here pleonastic). It is the "Saman-madi" of the Fanti, and the "Ipo-oku" of the Egbas. Mr. Duncan (vol. i. p. 116), mentions a Custom held on April 11, 1845, "to ensure to the spirits of departed friends a safe and easy passage across the great waters westward. They mean the river Votta (Volta). If this custom were not kept up, they believe the spirits would wander on the banks for the space of 100 years, before they would have performed sufficient

---

penance for their friends' neglect." But this is a mixture of European classical belief and the creed of the Gold Coast, especially of the Ga, or Accra race, whose ghosts dwell beyond the Volta.

believe themselves to be summoned by some ancestral ghost: they repair to certain priests—mostly those of the small-pox, the iron, the poison-tree, and the rainbow gods—not those of the snake or the sea—and pay a dollar fee for the holy man to descend and deliver their excuses. The fetisheer covers himself with a cloth, and, after his trance, reports how, down among the dead men, he found the shades eating, drinking, and making merry. He will even bring back from Hades rare beads known to have been buried with a certain corpse; and sometimes he must pawn his clothes to obtain a specimen or a counterfeit. One of these worthies on the Gold Coast, after returning with a declaration that he had left a marked coin in Dead-land, dropped it from his waist-cloth at the feet of the payer whilst drinking rum. But *populus vult decipi.* Some fetisheers, exactly like our mediums, pretend to summon the ghosts. On the other hand, the departed often returns to earth in the body of a child, and yet remains in Dead-land—an idea which some travellers have confounded with metempsychosis. Curious to relate, the Dahomans have a morbid fear of losing life: death is never mentioned in the King's presence except by some euphuism, as "the tree has fallen." As a rule, the more precise the knowledge of and the belief in a future world, the less value do the believers attach to present existence.

With so many priests the people must have numerous ceremonies. The child's name is given on the eighth day after the Buko-no has pronounced what ancestor has sent it. The Genesitic precept (xvii. 10), here called Adda-gbwibo, is not confined to the priestly practitioner. At Whydah it is effected between the twelfth and sixteenth year; at Agbome it is deferred till the twentieth: consequently, many fall ill after it, and some die. The roughly-performed operation is rendered peculiar by a double cut above and below: it is rather in the Moslem than in the Jewish fashion, but it is doubtless indigenous, as amongst many tribes of Central Africa. Hot sand is applied as a styptic to the wound; the patient is dieted with ginger soup and warm drinks of ginger water, pork being especially forbidden to him. The sister operation, excision, wonderful to say, is entirely unknown; the reverse being so much the custom, that a woman in the natural state is derided by others. The *artiste* is some ancient *sage femme*, and the effect is an exaggeration of that which particularised the Hottentot Venus dissected by Cuvier.

The Dahoman marriage is somewhat complicated. The aspirant sends to his intended father-in-law's house a man and a woman with two double flasks of rum. These Mercuries open the affair, after many preliminaries, by saying, "Our uncle wishes to wed one of your girls." The parent inquires and learns the suitor's name, after which the proxies retire. If Afa return a favourable reply, the family is informed of the coming event, and the empty flasks are sent back, to signify consent and to grant affiance. This honour is acknowledged by two other and full flasks; at the same time two heads of cowries and two cottons for his *fiancée* being forwarded by Cœlebs. He then collects as much cloth as he can,[*] and this task may occupy three years, during which he is expected to perform all Customs which the girl may have omitted, such as sacrifice for her grandmother and other relatives.

On the "happy day"—which is always Sunday—three messengers with flasks of rum are sent by the bridegroom at morning, noon, and sunset, to beg their daughter from her parents. A large *cortége* brings the bride to her future home. The father and mother are seated upon chairs, and ensues a general feast and carouse, as many goats and pigs as possible being cooked; the banquet begins and ends with water and then rum.

---

[*] The price of a wife, "young and uncorrupted," in Virginia, about 1620, was 100lbs. of tobacco, each pound worth three shillings.

After midnight the bridegroom retires to his sleeping chamber, and sits on his couch. Three or four fetish-women, holding the girl's wrists, lead her in and place her two hands in his, saying, "Take your wife, we give her to you; flog her if she is bad, and feed and clothe her well if she pleases you." They then drink water, rum, gin, and liqueurs with the new couple; and at 3 or 4 A.M. retire, leaving them to become *baron* and *feme*.

The Dahomans are not behind the people of Europe in attaching an extravagant value to the *primitiæ*. According to Mosaic custom, the bridegroom at once bears rejoicing to his people the piece of grey or white baft which covers the nuptial couch. On the bride's side, a young girl, left purposely in the house when the parents and friends have retired, runs off with the discoloured "languti," or T-bandage, here universally worn. Great rejoicings follow the demonstration that the daughter has proved herself an *illibata virgo*. Should the other thing happen, some men send home their brides in wrath,[*] and demand back their property of the father, who seeks out the author of his family disgrace and compels him to pay substantial damages.

If all has passed off well, the husband, early on Monday morning, carries cowries and rum, as presents, to the parents of his spouse. The bride, after a week's cohabitation, returns to her old home. On the first Saturday she cooks food, and sends it to her master, who on the next morning returns a gift of cloth, and from ten to forty heads of cowries: dollars, however, are not refused. On the same evening the bride returns permanently to her abode, and on Monday morning she visits the market and buys liquor and provisions as a final feast for her husband's family. When the short period, corresponding with our honeymoon, has elapsed, she joins the rest of the wives in the field or the plantation, and subsides into a quasi-servile position. The vile trick of alluring the unwary into *crim. con.*, is as well understood at Agbome as at Abeokuta.

The barren woman is called, in Ffon, "wen-si-no;" the Dahoman, however, does not, like the Egba, attribute her misfortune to bad health, nor is the word insulting, as it generally is in Asia and Africa. As usual, throughout savage Africa, osculation is unknown, even by name, and an offer to "salute" on the part of a white man is attributed to a display of his cannibal propensities.

---

[*] The Jews were more ferocious (Deut. xxii. 21).

Curious to say, there is in barbarous Dahome a coroner's inquest after every death. The kings, who here monopolise murder, hearing that many masters killed their slaves, established in all the towns "Gevi," or officers charged with controlling the abuse. When a death is reported they must inspect the body; and their fee for certifying a natural death is a head and a half of cowries. Then begins the chio-nun, or "corpse time or mourning," during which the weeping relatives must fast, and refrain from bathing, but not from singing and dram-drinking. The body is shaved, washed, and habited in its best attire, with bracelets, necklaces, and other ornaments, not forgetting a piece of cloth as a change of raiment when arriving in Dead-land. A coffin is made of bamboo, or of native or foreign wood; its huge size denotes, as in the Congo regions, a caboceer. The body is disposed on one side, as if sleeping.

Except under peculiar circumstances,* the corpse, as usual in Guinea from the Kru country to the south coast, is interred, either in its own house or in the abode of certain ancestors. An oblong grave is dug for the coffin: the paupers, who are buried wrapped up in palm-matting, are placed, as among the Moslems, in a niche offsetting from a circular pit. The body is lowered with ropes, earth is filled in, and the ground is smoothened with water. After mourning nine days, the men and women relatives and friends visit the wives and family of the deceased, join in the myriology, and dash to them cowries and cloths to decorate the last home.

"Here bring the last sad gifts—with these
  The last lament be said;
Let all that pleased, and still may please
  Be buried with the dead."

When a human sacrifice is made the head is placed upon the grave, and the body is interred alongside of the corpse so honoured. Usually they plant over the dead an Asen, or short cresset-shaped iron, upon whose flat top water or blood, as a drink for the deceased, is poured. When a Dahoman is interred abroad, a little earth from his tomb is brought home.*

---

* As royal blood must not be shed, Tegbwesun (Bossa Ahadi) threw his brother Zingah into the sea off Whydah.

At Whydah missionary enterprise is still young; it is therefore not to be judged as if it had enjoyed a fair trial. But all who know how deeply rooted is fetishism in the negro brain, will despair of the nineteenth succeeding better than the sixteenth century. In our modern day the good work has begun here with the curse of sectarian theology upon it: Catholics and Protestants working against one another in the same field. I leave Messrs. Wallon and Dawson to speak each for the success of his own "doxy," and for the probable failure of the others:—

M. Wallon.	Mr. Dawson.
"Des bannières, des tableaux pieux, des images, des médailles distribuées comme grisgris, deviendraient fétiches pour eux et les	"Fetish has been strengthened by the white man, whom the ignorant blacks would not scruple to call a god if he could avoid death.†

---

* Amongst the Egbas and various tribes of the Congo family (Douville, Voyage au Congo, vol. i. chap. 13), various small parts of the body are brought home to be reinterred.

† This is good testimony upon a point which only interest or the veriest ignorance would dispute. Almost every West African tongue testifies that the speakers consider white men supernatural beings on account of their vast superiority, in all the arts of life, to these poor pagans. The Krumen call Europeans Ku-be, or the ghost-tribe; the Efik tribe of Old Calabar, Mbum Ekpo, or spirit men, and the Mpongwe of the Gaboon River, Mbuiri or ghost, and so on.

disposeraient à connaître les signes qu'ils doivent respecter. Avec leur tendance à nous considérer comme réellement supérieurs à eux et leur croyance que cette supériorité nous est acquise par celle de notre Dieu, ils renonceraient bientôt aux leurs pour adorer celui que nous leur prions de connaître! Les femmes et les vieillards seraient là comme partout les plus difficiles à vaincre; mais on s'emparerait aisément de l'esprit des enfans dans un pays qui de lui-même a une véritable disposition à la civilisation."

N.B. All of which is contradicted by actual experiment.

Gezo told me that, hearing the white man's god was at the beach, he was surprised, thinking that he lived above, but ordered the Yevo-gan to bring him on shore. When this was done, the people found "gods many," like their own, the work of men's hands, only better made, and brought them, with firing and drumming, to a house built for them in the town. The King had now not only his own but the white man's gods, and thus he easily prevailed over the Oyos, whom his father could not drive out. Were not these grounds strong to compel the African's mind to a complete reliance on the efficacy of his fetish?"

N.B. Much of which has been proved to be true by the "inexorable logic of facts."

I cannot better conclude this chapter than with the words of an old traveller: "It is morally impossible by mere human ministry to convince the people of their errors and gross paganism, as it is to convert all other blacks, unless Providence would effect a prodigious change in their natures by its infinite irresistible grace."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SIN-KWAIN,* OR WATER-SPRINKLING CUSTOM.

This ceremony follows closely upon the So-sin, or Horse-tie rites. All the Dahoman kings are interred, I have said, in the palace of Agbome, where their graves are in different buildings. The King, however, must repair to the several abodes of his ancestors in the order of their succession, and he usually sleeps five to eight nights in each house. The ghosts of the old kings are induced to lend their aid in present wars by their tombs being sprinkled with water; which in Dahome means, of course, blood, and that blood, human.

On January 9th, 1863, the King, after "giving water to his father" in the Komasi Palace, passed about nightfall with loud singing, drumming, and firing, to the gate of Aho, in the Agbome House. This monarch, the Adahoonzou I. of our histories, is the second of the list, being the son of Dako (Tacoodonou), the Romulus of Dahome. Yet he is preferred before his sire in all rites and ceremonies, Dako being looked upon as a mere captain, Aho as the founder of the capital, and the originator of the gong-gong beaters, or heralds. There is a legend, that he made during his father's life a public assertion of royal dignity, by committing the offence which Ahitophel prescribed to Absolom.*

---

* Sin (water), kwain (sprinkling). This is generally called Giving water to the spirits of ancestors, and Commander Forbes writes the word, See-que-'ah-hee (*passim*).

On the present occasion the King was hurried; during this moon of the last year he had set out on his campaign; he therefore passed, after the second day, to the old Dahoman palace, where the same pious rites were performed for Dako (Tacoodonou), and Akaba (Weebaigah), the third king. Wishing to see the ceremony, which is not usually shown to strangers, I spoke to the Buko-no, who sent a message to summon us at 2 P.M. We were accompanied by Mr. Dawson, the ex-missionary. Having once been detained eighty-five days at Agbome by the present King, who is worse than his father,† he had sent so many excuses to the royal invitations, which here are commands, that all expected to see him brought up by force. Setting out from the north-western corner of the Agbome Palace, along the broad road which surrounds it, we met at that hot hour few of the bell-ringing she-slaves that usually infest the thoroughfare. It led us to the north side of the royal enceinte, which is upwards of a geographical mile in circumference; here a rough fence of palm mats and a humble entrance denoted the place where a clay wall and a barn gate would be built, and called after Zoindi, the King's mother. After passing another mean entrance, we came to that of Senunmé, mother of Agongoro, the usual sloping shed backed by the swish wall, which here became continuous. A few paces beyond it was the Porte of Agontimé, mother of Gezo, distinguished by a perpendicular line of ten skulls set in the outer face of the wall, and four horizontally disposed in its depth at right angles to the door, to which a single cranium was nailed. This gate opens to the north-west, upon a cleared space, with fine sward, dotted with thick-shaded trees; on both sides of the entrance are figs, and beyond this "Green Park" rises

---

* Josephus (lib. 7. chap. 10).

† The captivity of a visitor at Agbome is complete. Europeans usually

begin to talk of leaving on the day of their arrival at the capital, or the people will be persuaded that the whites desire to remain.

a clump of dirty mat huts—the Ajyahi market. Here on alternate years, the Human Sacrifices of the Platforms are performed by the King, who throws to his subjects cloths and cowries, captives and criminals. Two stages are erected for this tragedy, one, the Akhosu Atto, or King's Platform, due north of the gate; the other Addo-kpon, or the Bush King's stage, rises a little to the west of where the market sheds now stand, clustering round a gigantic and obscene clay image of the Bo-god. At the north-eastern extremity of the green stands a national trophy, a large heap of granite stones, brought, one by each soldier, from the hill fort of Kenglo,* when "Ho-ho"—Mr. Duncan—was insulted, and which Gezo, his host, razed to the ground. Further lies Abiji, the Potter's Field of Dahome, where thick smoke may often be seen in the morning.

Beyond the Ajyahi market, the Green Park, and the Potteries, are two gates, bearing the name of Chai, mother of Tegbwesun (Bossa Ahadi), and near it a small entrance where pots made in the palace are exposed for sale. Ceramics are here in the same condition as Palissy found them three centuries ago throughout Europe. The material, clay, glittering with mica, is brought by women from a neighbouring water called Diddo, and is hand-made; the wheel, as usual in Africa, is unknown to the skilful Zen-men-to,* who are not, however, confined to the palace. The smaller fictile wares fetch seven to fifteen strings, the larger water-jars half a head, or one shilling each, and the price rises high at Whydah. They are under-baked, and of unequal thickness, therefore of extreme fragility, and the roads are strewed with their débris.

---

* Or Kengro, the Koglo of Mr. Duncan (vol. ii. chap. 3). Ho-ho means a tall man.

Near the palace-potteries houses crowd upon the outside wall, which has another gate; from this the royal women go forth to fetch wood and water: it is also provided with two exterior sheds, under which men shelter themselves when waiting. The seventh entrance has a large barn, called after Ahwanjile, mother of Sinmenkpen (Adahoonzou II.), and beyond it at the north-eastern corner of the enceinte is that of Addono, mother of Agaja the Conqueror, fronted by a fetish shed, resting upon two mud columns, chequered with whitewash and grey-black.

Here we turned off to the left,† where a very torn and tattered swish wall showed us that we were at the Dahome Palace, the cradle of the royal family. Opposite the entrance was a small open space, and behind us on to the south was the palace of the Min-gan, who, like the Meu, has the charge of victims and state prisoners. From where our chairs were placed, little was to be seen,—two humble thatch roofs, and a pair of silver or plated imitations of birds, peering above the old enceinte; sounds were heard inside, and at times we were passed by men beating together solid bars of iron and blowing through the four-holed flageolets, here called Pwete.* After sending in vain sundry messages to the King, we became wearied of the *séance*, and returned

---

* Zen (pot), men (person, or making?), to (one that does).

† Passing Addono's Gate to the right we find a deep angle in the

---

palace wall, where water is poured out to King Aho (Adahoonzou I.), at an entrance called Patin sa, "near the Patin-tree." Beyond it an avenue of pollarded trees, leading to nothing, encloses a long and large ridge, such as were turned up by the hoe in the good old times: it is still kept as a model. Further eastward, and going under the usual "Vo" gallows with a central mat, we come to the Han-ho-nukun-ji Gate, where Agaja the Conqueror's palace begins. The next building of any importance in the enceinte is the Agrigomen Gate, which, like the whole of the southern and south-western side, has been described in Chap. X.

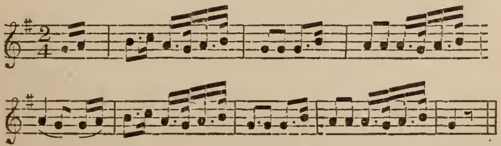
* The word is a corruption of the Fanti "ketí." It is an artless reed, open at both ends, with a little notch in the mouth-piece, which is scraped thin to divide the wind. Mr. Dalzel remarks (Introd., p. xi.) that "the King's women understand and practise the combination of the perfect concords, thirds and fifths," and that their little airs, played upon the flute and other instruments, are not inelegant. Dr. Bowdich describes "the soft breathings of the long flutes" at Ashante as being

home to make a serious "palaver" with the "landlord." His excuse was that the sovereign had been pronouncing a long speech, which could not be interrupted. I imagine that Gelele does not wish strangers to see the nakedness of his old palaces, or the thinness of the company in them assembled. Perhaps also the presence of the victims may have something to do with the exclusiveness.

The following is an account of the "Water-sprinkling" rites, given to me by an eye-witness. The victims on each occasion are said not to exceed two, and I have heard of the King judging one hundred and sixty, and dismissing all without capital punishment. The tomb is approached with animals of all sorts, from a bullock to a pigeon, with water, rum, kola-nuts, and many minor things. Whilst the ministers and captains are, like the King, on all fours, the Dahoman form of kneeling, before the tomb, a Tansi-no priestess, of blood-

---

"truly melodious." Dr. M'Leod (p. 96) finds the *flageolets* of Dahome very sweet, and in the next page gives the following sample of an air :—



royal, offers up to the Ghost a prayer for its living descendant's long life and prosperity, and all of the ancestral shades are invoked at each palace. She then pours water and rum upon the grave, which is afterwards sprinkled with the blood of men and beasts, then and there killed. The non-human meat is finally dressed, and a "tavo," or table, is "spread," the stool of the deceased being placed upon it as an emblem of his presence, and meat and drink are strewed upon the mats around it. This part ends with a general distribution of the provisions—the royal portion being sent inside the palace. Mr. Bernasko described the ceremony, which he was permitted to see, as follows: An enclosure of cloth surrounded the stool, or some similar relic of the departed; a Tansi-no woman entered within it and prayed; and lastly, the King, after performing his orisons, sprinkled on the ground, to the right of the throne, rum, water, and native beer. It is said by some that the monarch drinks a glass of blood at the Dahome Palace, but this sensational report is highly improbable.

On January 14th, Gelele proceeded to the Agrin-go-men House, and watered the grave of the great Agaja Dosu, who received a pair of victims. The next day saw him at the palace of the King Tegbwesun (Bossa Ahadi), outside the western walls of Agbome, in a place called Adan-do-'kpo-ji Daho.* He then removed to the Lisehunzo † or House of Sinmenkpen (Adahoonzou II.), which lies north of its neighbour, and separated by fields which abound in partridges. Both are approached by a poor gate in the city enceinte, called Sikpo. During the firing which accompanied these pilgrimages, several accidents occurred. On the evening of the 16th, the King returned to Bwe-kon, a kind of village, near the Komasi Palace, where there is a Kwe-gbo, or old and bush-grown enceinte, belonging to Agongoro (Wheenoohew), his grandfather. About midnight a servant of the Matro, whose left hand had been shattered by the bursting of the musket, awoke us with loud and piteous cries of Ye-e-e-gé! ‡ Dr. Haran had treated an Amazon for the same accident, and Mr. Cruikshank had excised a tumour from the forehead of another soldieress; neither of these had uttered a groan. The King showed as much anxiety for the man's hurt as if he had been a caboceer. The wrist bones being shattered, and the thumb hanging by a strip of flesh, Mr. Cruikshank proposed an amputation. Having ascertained that we had no chloroform, and determined that without such medicine so terrible an operation could never be endured by man, the King refused his consent, and the Buko-no removed the thumb and dressed the wound after his own fashion. This piece of conservative surgery was by no means successful, the man dying, probably of suppuration, a few days afterwards. Finally, on January 19th, the King returned with great noise and tumult to his father's palace of Komasi; and so ended the "Water-sprinkling" custom of 1864.

---

* Meaning Adan (brave), do (live), 'kpo (high place), ji (he stops or lives). Daho is great. Some call it Adan-do-'kpo-ji Khe-sa, from khe (a kind of tree), and sa (under).

† Lise (a tree before described), and hun-zo, a kind of fetish.

‡ In Fanti, Mewo! or megyá!—"My father!"

At the risk of repetition, I must again refer to a curious fixed idea in England, absonant withal, touching human sacrifice at Dahome. It is no mere lust of blood nor delight in torture and death that underlies the rite in these lands. The King has to perform a disagreeable task over his ancestral graves, and he does it; his subjects would deem it impious were he to curtail or to omit the performance, and suddenly to suppress it would be as if a European monarch were forcibly to abolish prayers for the dead.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF "THE NEGRO'S PLACE IN NATURE."

"Vices the most notorious seem to be the portion of this unhappy race—idleness, treachery, revenge, cruelty, impudence, stealing, lying, profanity, debauchery, and intemperance, are said to have extinguished the principles of natural law and to have silenced the reproofs of conscience. They are strangers to every sentiment of compassion, and are an awful example of the corruption of man when left to himself."—*Encyclopædia Britannica.* Art. "Negro" (1797).

TO THE FOUNDER OF THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF LONDON,

JAMES HUNT, Esq., Ph.D., F.S.A., etc. etc. etc.

"My Dear Hunt,

"I have read with pleasure and profit your able and courageous paper on the 'Negro's Place in Nature.' It shows the reason why, at the last meeting of the British Association, you were received with those encouraging sounds, which suggested a mob of Eve's tempters rather than a scientific assembly of her descendants. Truth—especially new Truth—will ever meet with some such left-handed compliment, which is, however, the sincerest homage. Those hisses would have sounded in my ears far sweeter than any cheers. In the case of your able supporter, my friend Mr. C. Carter Blake, I can only hope that he shared in your honours.

"Like other students of anthropology, I am truly grateful to you for having so graphically shown the great gulf, moral and physical, separating the black from the white races of men, and for having placed in so striking a light the physiological cause of the difference—namely, the arrested physical development of the negro. There is hardly a traveller, however unobservant, who has not remarked the peculiar and precocious intelligence of the African's childhood, his 'turning stupid' as the general phrase is, about the age of puberty, and the rapid declension of his mental powers in old age,—a process reminding us of the simiad. It is pleasant to see anatomically discovered facts harmonising with, and accounting for, the provisionary theories of those who register merely what they have observed. M. Gratiolet's Eureka, that in the occipital or lower breeds of mankind, the sutures of the cranium close at an earlier age than amongst the frontal races, admirably explains the phenomenon which has struck the herd of men, however incurious: it assigns a physical cause for the inferiority of the negro, whose psychical and mental powers become stationary at an age when, in nobler races, the perceptive and reflective principles begin to claim ascendancy.

"In the letter prefixed to your excellent paper, you have called upon me for my experience of the psychological character of the negro race. My opinions have been formed mostly by comparing, after ten years of travel, 'on and off,' the Africans with the Western Asiatics, amongst whom I have lived eight years, for the most part like one of themselves. This chapter is therefore dedicated to you, with the especial hope that your paper, which is a credit to English anthropology, may, in course of time, be expanded into a volume. The subject naturally parts itself into three: 1. The popular opinion touching the negro in the pre-Abolitionist times; 2. The general sentiments during that period of violent reaction; and, 3. The present state of the public mind when it is gradually settling into a middle and rational course. After being for some years 'paradoxical' in my conviction of the innate and enduring inferiority of a race which has had so many an opportunity of acquiring civilisation, but which has ever deliberately rejected improvement, I find that the rising authors are beginning to express opinions far more decided than mine, and I foresee the futurity of hard compulsory labour which the negromaniac will have brought upon his African *protégé.* The philanthropico-criminal movement that began with Howard, has at last reached, we are told, its limit of exaggeration, and the pendulum begins slowly to swing back. It is the same with the negro, and as travelling becomes more common, and the world knows more about him, he will lose *prestige* every year. In his case, as with the criminal, though there is little danger of our relapsing into cruelties of which we read with shame, yet there is an ill time coming. For sons may avenge the credulity of their sires, by running into the clear contrary extremes, and the unnatural 'man and brother' of the day may relapse into the 'nigger,' the 'savage,' and the 'semi-gorilla' of the morrow. Already there is a dawn of belief in a specific difference between the races, which, carried out, leads to strange conclusions. Perhaps—permit me to observe—our society could do nothing more useful than to determine what signification the debated word 'species' should convey to the English anthropologist. But the committee appointed to report on the terminology of that science of which we are the humble students, will probably have done so before these lines are published.

"The following remarks were written at Agbome long before I had seen your pamphlet, and but little has been added to the original sketch. With you I deprecate any political object being attributed to them.

> 'I do confess it is my nature's plague
> To spy into abuses.'

But this inclination is not indulged, as some unwarrantably believe, from any 'spite' against, 'antipathy' to, or 'instinctive aversion' from the negro, whom I regard as both useful and valuable in his proper Place in Nature; nor have I any wish to 'scare or outrage' any 'class,' by 'rabid flying at anything with a natural or artificial black coat.' These be Irishisms.

"Hoping that your able President-ship will long continue to conduct the affairs of our young society with the unexampled success of the last two years, and believing with you that it is destined to accomplish the great and important objects for which it was established,

"I subscribe myself,
"My dear Hunt,
"Yours very faithfully,
"RICHARD F. BURTON."

When doctors are differing, and the professionally learned are disputing, about the existence or non-existence of a great structural gulf between the black and white races, it behoves the empirical student, in other words the traveller, to record his experience of, and to offer his opinion upon, the workings of the African's mental machinery. By these means we can obtain an *à posteriori* evidence of difference in mental and moral, and consequently in material, status; and it is only by the comparison of many testimonies that the delicate essence of truth can be evoked.* Before, however, proceeding to the pith and marrow of the matter, a few premisses must be briefly laid down.

---

* I was not a little amused by a reviewer of "The Lake Regions of Central Africa," in a fifth-rate provincial paper, who, after thanking me for my facts, resolutely insisted upon supplanting all my deductions by his own. Writers in the (London) "Times," and the "Saturday Review," enjoy a prescriptive right to "do the thinking" for their readers; but we are apt to recalcitrate when the critical hand of a Methodistico-Missionary print arrogates to itself such claim.

Touching the African,* it may be observed that there are in England at least two distinct creeds: 1. That of those who know him; 2. That of those who do not. This may be predicated of most other moot points: in the negro's case, however, the singularity is, that ignorance not knowledge, sentimentality not sense, sway the practical public mind.† Hence, at every division, non-knowledge has on its side a majority, and a something inherent in the unthinking looks upon this as a test of truth, when the contrary is more often the case. For all things, true, great, and good form an imposing minority.

Of the two types—the ignorant and the non-ignorant—the former is best exampled by the north of Europe, and pre-eminently so by England.‡ The southern nations, for instance the Spaniard, without even looking upon the negro as his equal, and convinced of his own superiority, endeavours to raise his congener in the scale of creation, and is not irritated by failure because he is prepared for it.* With us the "platform" selected during a rancorous political and property quarrel is still held immutably true. These principles are supported by the actives, the philanthropic few, between whom and Good Sense runs a broad line of demarcation, and by those personally interested in keeping up the delusion; and wonderful is the effect of English atmosphere upon unpopular ideas imported from abroad. The passives are the many listeners. To this supreme ignorance I must attribute the general failure of English missionary enterprise in Africa, and to a great extent the late lamentable occurrences, in which conversion has ended with "killing no murder." It is not a little instructive to see the effect of Africa upon the exceptional philanthropist—as a rule, he so loves all men, himself in-

---

* Used in the sense of negro, concerning which, more presently.

† The affecting appeal, "Am I not a man and a brother?" accompanying on the seal of the Anti-Slavery Committee a kneeling negro, who, properly speaking, should have been on all-fours, has been to Africa what Pope's "Lo, the poor Indian!" has been to Anglo-America, —a power steadily influencing national policy.

‡ The leaders in the "Times" (1859), as quoted by Mr. M'Henry

---

("The Cotton Trade," pp. 68, 75), ought to bring some knowledge to a "public": seemingly they have not.

* "The Spaniards and Portuguese treat their slaves in every respect better than the African slave merchants; and I know, from personal inquiry, that none of M. de Suza's slaves would accept their liberty from choice." (Mr. Duncan, Vol. I. p. 114).

cluded, that he avoids the land as a pestilence. When visiting the "Dark Continent," he finds those living amongst negroes all convinced of the African's absolute inferiority; he resists the evil influence as long as his nature permits, and he lapses usually into the extreme contrary to that with which he commenced. He begins by treating his blacks as men and brethren, he ends, perhaps, with cruelty to them; whilst he has secured their contempt by degrading himself to their level in attempting to raise them to his own.

To the home-bred Englishman, who has no personal experience of the African, I would oppose the Anglo-American. The Northerner and the Canadian see, it is true, the negro in that debased state to which his race is condemned by climate above the Missouri Compromise Line.* Beginning in Pennsylvania, the Abolitionist traded his slaves down south—not liberated them—because they were not worth their hire. But he has ever kept those who live under his protection in their proper position, distinct from himself, in the church as in the omnibus, whilst none but the extremest sectarians would admit them to the family circle, or marry daughters to them. On the other hand, the Southerner knows the African, and is known to him; hence in Africa he manages the negro better than other white men.* As a boy he has a black nurse and sable foster brother, and in after years he is connected with the "chattels" by the tie of a common interest. He laments the existence of slavery, but he finds himself fast bound to it by the law of self-preservation. Having wandered through every State of the Anglo-American Republic, I can safely assert that in none of the richest, namely, the centres of cotton, tobacco, and sugar, is white labour possible. If this be true, surely the Abolitionist should qualify himself by six months' work in Louisiana and the negrophile by a year of "Wandering in West Africa," before they venture upon their peculiar statements. "The South" is between the horns of the dilemma, slavery or ruin, and she necessarily prefers the former. That emancipated negroes will work willingly in genial tropical climates, where life is so easily supported, contradicts all our experience of the race ; and after seeing the black in many parts of Africa, under his own rule, and under that of foreigners, French and English, Spanish and Portuguese, I am convinced that the serfs of a Southern plantation would not change lots with their free brethren.

---

* In N. Lat. 36° 30′—a moral tropic, a boundary between free labour and slave labour, laid down by the hand of Nature herself.

---

* Thus the Northerner as an overseer is notably more impatient with, and cruel to, the slaves than a Southerner.

Returning to public opinion at home touching the negro, we find in its present transitional state four popular errors, which are amply sufficient to confuse the whole subject.

The first, and the front of offence, is the confusion of the mixed and the mulatto with the full-blooded negro. By the latter word I understand the various tribes of intertropical Africa, unmixed with European or Asiatic blood.* In Anglo-America the least African taint makes a man a "negro." Messrs. Nott and Gliddon—to whom Dr. Waitz has done scanty justice—were, methinks, justified in asserting that a few drops of the purer *ichor* produce a decided modification in the moral and physical character of the black. Had the Slave States manumitted and deported their mulattos, the present state of things might not have been. In Southern America, also, the mongrel is the canker of society and of political life. In England, every frothy spouter of hackneyed phrases, though he begins by owning to a mixture of race which, whilst subordinating him to his father in intellect, and, not unfrequently, in *physique*, to his mother,* still enables him to distance his indigenous half-brothers, is hearkened to as a dingy Daniel come to judgment—"a logical bomb falling amongst the Pandits"—a standing and a talking proof that the mulatto's maternal is equal, if not superior, to his paternal family. When I see such a mongrel, who everywhere hates both the purer races

---

* In our popular works—treasuries of error—every one born in Africa is "a negro." Thus "God's Image in Ebony" (London, Partridge and Oakley), offers in two pages (93, 94), as "convincing proofs that the negro is morally and intellectually as well as physically the equal of the white man," the following jumble of instances: Minerva (a negro princess!), Origen and Athanasius (Alexandrian), Tertullian, Augustine (Numidian), Alexandrinus and Cyril (Moors), Arius (Cyreniac and Semitic speaking), Hannibal (a Phœnician), and Terence (a Roman). Messrs. Adams, Cherson, and Armistead should learn their ethnological alphabet before quoting these as "negro representatives of

---

science, learning, religion, war, and poetry." The Abbé Gregoire's examples are mostly mulattos, as Christophe and Dessalines. The oft-quoted Mr. ex-President Roberts, of Liberia, is an octaroon.

* The older theory was, that in such mules the mother-blood predominates (Estwick, History of Jamaica). But this is, to say the least, doubtful.

from which he sprang, stand up, backed, probably, by a philanthropic and fighting Quaker, before a learned society, ere his lips open it is known to me what parrot-talk he will emit. Cicero, writing to Atticus, deemed the ancient Britons (*with whom the modern English have little in common*) too stupid for slavery (*decidedly a compliment, according to our ideas*).* The white man is not looked upon as a superior being in Black-land † (*the speaker well knowing that his sole merit at home in Africa is the title of "oibo-dudu," or "white black"*); that there are "full-blooded negroes" who have risen to distinction (*quoting a few exceptions, who are not full-blooded, to prove the rule*), and that Paul's Epistle to Philemon (*merely recommending, on ground of his conversion, the manumission of a fugitive*) was concerning a "servant" (*of* δοῦλος, *I need hardly say, he had never heard*). He will probably "bring down the house" with something of Cowper's wishy-washy sentimentality, as,

---

* To my astonishment I have heard this threadbare fallacy quoted in all simplicity by Mr. Charles Sumner, the Massachusetts Abolitionist. The Britons' inaptitude to learn music and other accomplishments may still be traced in their purest descendants.

† In Africa, as in India, the aristocracy of the skin, as the French deputy tauntingly called it, or the "prejudice of colour" as the modern phrase runs, is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual difference. One of Mr. Prichard's few good generalisations is, that as a rule the darker and dingier the African tribe, the more degraded is its organisation.

"Fleecy locks and black complexion,*
Cannot alter Nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same." †

And the herd at Newcastle—how deep their studies! how extensive their experience!—will hiss a counter-statement, and go home convinced that they have been listening to a speech by a highly intellectual negro, when the oft-repeated cant is doled out from memory by a white man with a "dash of the tar-brush!"

---

* The purely melanous complexion is rare in Africa, where, moreover, it is generally admired. The fetor is more conclusive as a test than the colour of the skin. There is no exception to the rule of smell.

† Which I deny. Affection, like love, is the fruit of animalism refined by sentiment. The old travellers knew better than the poet. "Here paternal affections and filial love hardly exist," says the History. So Bosman declares of the Gold Coast, "The mother gives the infant suck for two or three years; which over, and they able to go, it is then 'Turn out, brutes!'" An absorbing egotism is the necessary rule of savage and barbarous humanity, and society must have made great progress before a man can think of his neighbour's interests and live. Hence the old author asserted of the negroes, "They are insensible to grief and want, sing till they die, and dance into their graves." Mr. Duncan (vol. ii. p. 79) says, "Not even the appearance of affection exists between husband and wife, or between parents and children. So little do they care for their offspring, that many offered to sell me one of their sons or daughters as slaves. They are, to speak the truth, in point of parental affection, inferior to brutes." But why multiply quotations?

The second error is the confusion of the negroid, the Semiticised, or the noble African,* with the ignoble pure negro. This is a more venial blunder than the first, because ethnological knowledge is requisite to draw the distinction; but its effects are even worse. The traveller is ever falling into this pit, and the mass of observers is as yet hardly aware of the distinction. Of the alphabet invented by the Vai or Vahie—a race cognate with the Mandenga and cognisant of the Koran—Commander Forbes (Vol. I. p. 200) remarks, "How far we must have mistaken the African's constitution!" Mr. Winwood Reade proposes to apply the term "negro" to the maritime races, and "African" to those of the interior: but in the central continent there are tribes as purely negro as on the coast. Others would assume 10° N. lat., and the same line south of the equator, as the boundaries of the race; in the interior, however, it crosses both these limits, nor has any frontier been traced by travellers. As I have said, the fetor is the grand discrimen; thus we distinguish the Somali Semite and free man from his slave neighbour, the Kisawahili, and the Asiatic Malagash from the negro Johanna-man, who will call himself an offset from the noble Arabian Kuraysh. By not attending to this distinction between nobles and ignobles, the Moor of Venice has been represented as a "nigger." When such men as Touissant l'Ouverture [*] ("The Opener") are quoted as "full-blooded blacks," I must discover, before assenting to that proposition, what was their descent. They might be of Hausa, or other Semiticised blood; and this would be confounding Norman with Saxon. The negroid has taken a long step in the way of progress; for the Arab and the negro, as might be expected, combine better than the European and the black. [†] El Islam, by forbidding impure meats and spirituous liquors, [‡] by enjoining ablutions and decent dress, and by discouraging monogamy and polyandry, has improved the African's *physique*, and through it, by inevitable sequence, his *morale*.

---

* Arab, Moorish, Abyssinian, Egyptian, Nubian, and Berber.

---

[*] His true race seems to be unknown.

[†] The worst melange is perhaps the Anglo-Saxon and the negro. As in India, the French succeed better; there is a *naïveté* and coquetry in the Gallic half-caste which are unknown to our homely and unattractive "Cheechees."

[‡] Africans, like the lower Asiatics, ever drink to excess: "a glass or two" is a thing unknown to them. Consequently, rum has done more harm for them than the slave ship. As there is a perspective in crime, making the farthest appear the smallest, so, as the world progresses, the present acts of honest men, such as selling spirits, weapons, and ammunition to savages, will be looked upon by their grandsons as the "sum of all villanies."

It is a cognate and a congenial civilisation, not one imported from 1500 miles of latitude, and sitting grotesquely upon the black mind, as the accompanying vestments upon the sable body—both being made contemptible by the contrast of what is and what ought to be. The pure negro does not exist in septentrional or in Southern Africa. North of the Sahara men are more Semitic than Hamitic,* and resemble the peoples of Southern Europe more than they do the typical negro. I have elsewhere given reasons for suspecting in the great Kafir family a considerable mixture of Arab, Persian, and other Asiatic blood.

The third fallacy is that Europe, and especially England, were the means of introducing slavery into, or, at least, of increasing it in Africa, with a corollary —ever maintained by a missionary interest, crying "Give! Give! Give!"—that the empire must expiate the *delicta majorum* by spending money.† It requires the extremest illiterateness to hold such tenets. Slavery was a rule in the days of Abraham. Ezekiel (xxvii. 13) mentions "trading the persons of men" in the markets of Tyrus; and of the later classics there is not an author, from Juvenal to (Periplus) Arrian, who does not allude to it. The more we explore the African interior, and discover great races beyond the range of the white man, the more confirmed and complete is the system of serfdom and thraldom. The true African saying concerning the servile is, "Once a slave for ever a slave." And, as has been shown, the races that believe in another world, will not manumit their bondsmen even there.

---

* These are poor words for ethnologists, but intelligible. I use Hamitic for pure African or negro, Semitic for the Arab, and Japhetic for the Aryan, or Indo-European race.

† In 1561 (the date of Sir John Hawkins' first slave voyage), England took the first of three commercial steps that raised her to her present grandeur. A charter was presently granted by Queen Elizabeth, who became a large shareholder, and the live produce of Africa threw 500 millions sterling into the national purse. In 1756, after

The fourth delusion is that the African vends his wife—as does the *Anglais* in France—and his family. This is an effect of sensational oratory rather than of authority: all travellers have carefully contradicted the assertion. The accurate Bosman (1698) says: "Not a few in our country fondly imagine that parents here sell their children, men their wives, and

---

the success of Clive, the profits of India became the "soil and crops of England." In 1800 began that enormous importation of American cotton (the first few pounds were shipped in 1784), which formed the third and culminating commercial speculation.—"The Cotton Trade," by George M'Henry. London: Saunders, Otley & Co., 1863.

one brother the other ; but those who think so deceive themselves, for this never happens on any other account than that of necessity or some great crime ; but most of the slaves that are offered to us are prisoners of war, which are sold by the victors as their booty." The learned Barbot (book iv. chap. 1) declares that whilst the Slavonians traded with their progeny, in Africa the sale of children, wives, and relatives, "if it ever happens, is so seldom that it cannot be justly charged upon a whole nation as a custom and common practice." Commander Forbes (vol. i. p. 146) expressly asserts that "the laws of Dahomey forbid such an unnatural sale of human beings," which he seems to have found on the south-western coast. The few exceptions would be considered vile by their neighbour tribes, and even they rarely part with their own blood except in dire distress or famine. I have seen the same thing done in Sindh and in Western India.* As it is, the exported are almost invariably of two kinds—criminals and war captives; converted into cash when not wanted for the Customs. The absolute prevention of slave export is a very mitigated benefit—if, indeed, it be any—to the African slave; and our humanity has often acted, like sparrow clubs, in strengthening a worse plague. The History informs us that Agaja the Great, after "breaking" Whydah, slew 4000 men. Shortly afterwards, however, having taken 1800 prisoners from a nation that had offended him even more, "he contented his priests with 400 of them, ships being then in the road, when he could turn the remainder to profit." And we have this excellent advice: "It is enough to show through our history that avarice can sheathe the knife even of superstition, and that her incitements to slaughter, powerful as they may be, are confined within narrow limits when self-interest waits upon lenity."

---

* Not to mention children sold in England as sweeps. So on December 5, 1701, Alexander Steuart, found guilty at Perth of theft, was gifted by the Justiciary, instead of being killed, to Sir John Areskin, of Alva. Cromwell sold 3000 soldiers from Drogheda to the West India planters, much as the Pacha of Egypt has lately sold a regiment or two to France.

I now proceed to offer the reader the result of my actual experience of the negro character. The conviction that others, as competent to judge as myself, will join issue with me, is an inducement to proceed, in the hopes that truth may be elicited: whilst the suspicion that my statements will be far from popular, makes me look forward to the day when they will be.

The pure negro ranks in the human family below the two great Arab and Aryan races. In Asia he is prized as a slave for hard work; as a servant he is coarse-handed, pilfering, shameless, and with much of the frowardness of a baboon. No one thinks of him as a freeman; and he, "hereditary bondsman," never dreams of liberty, because no one suggests to him the idea.

The unpermanency of the half-breed, and the frequency of sterile marriages amongst mulattos, show an approach to specific difference* between the white and black races furthest removed in climate and civilisation.

The negro's brain, in which Burmeister and other

---

[*] Mr. Long (History of Jamaica) has testified to the frequent infecundity, and the limited prolificacy of the male and female mulatto. Geoffroy and Nott dwelt upon the sterility of mulattos, whilst Serres and others have asserted that the children of a white woman by a negro are rarely viable. Dr. Seemann observed at Panama, and in South America, that the European and the negro were not unlimitedly productive —rarely passing the second cross. Buffon defined species to be a "*succession constante d'individus semblables et qui se reproduisent.*" Hunter's criterion is, that the parents should produce an offspring equally prolific with themselves, whereas hybrids are incapable of perpetuating the breed. This fertility-test was widely recognised. Cuvier, followed by Prichard, defined species to include separate origin (how proved?) and constant transmission of organic peculiarities. Judged from this view-point, the negro is a sub-species or permanent variety of the *genus homo.*

physiologists found the convolutions less numerous and more massive than in the European, is, to judge from its action, weak—a very little learning addles it. Even the Islamised Somal hold those that read and write to be less than men, because their heads are good for nothing else.

One of the principal negro characteristics is his truly savage want of veneration for God or man ;—hence, the expressions which we should deem blasphemous in his wild state, and the peculiar tone of his prayer, commanding rather than supplicating, which distinguish him in his semi-civilisation.

In the negro the propensities and passions are tolerably well grown, the perceptives and reflectives are of inferior power, and the sentimental or moral regions remain almost undeveloped. This is apparently the rule of savage and barbarous races. His memory is mostly like that of the Australian—powerless, except in matters touching his self-interest. His face is an index to his mind. The circumoral region is prodigiously developed. The lower brow, where the perceptives are placed by phrenologists, denotes culture ; the upper forehead and the vertex of the cranium are weak, retreating, and flattened.

The extremes of climate and the pitiless fecundity of Nature have bound down the negro to the completely material. In this point he contrasts greatly with the Hindu, in whom imagination, outrunning intellect, degenerates into licence, and whose superabundance of reverence oppresses inquiry.

The negro is still at the rude dawn of faith—fetishism—and he has barely advanced to idolatry, the effect of deficient constructiveness.* He has never grasped the ideas of a personal Deity, a duty in life, a moral code, or a shame of lying. He rarely believes in a future state of rewards and punishments, which, whether true or not, are infallible indices of human progress.

The negro is, for the most part, a born servile—not a servant.† As has been said, in Dahome and Benin all the subjects are literally the king's property. We cannot, therefore, apply to him the Homeric statement that

---

* The organ, not the bump.

† So in Anglo-America every stranger has remarked that whilst the negro invariably chooses personal service, the American Indian, shrinking from it with loathing, affords hardly a single instance. In Africa, however, he has a good time of it. The author of "The Niger Expedition" (vol. i. p. 398), justly remarks that "domestic slavery in the negro's native land is not more irksome than servitude in ours"—he might safely have said more. And it must be remembered, as Mungo Park stated in the last century, that paid service is unknown to the negro. Indeed, African languages ignore the word.

> "The day
> Makes man a slave takes half his worth away."

The negro will obey a white man more readily than a mulatto, and a mulatto rather than one of his own colour.* He never thinks of claiming equality with the Aryan race, except when taught. At Whydah the French missionaries remark that their scholars always translate "white and black" by "master and slave." And he readily submits to the iron hand.

The negro has an instinctive and unreasoning aversion to increasing population,† without which there can be no progress. A veritable Malthusian, he has a variety of traditions justifying infanticide, ordeal, and sacrifice, as if, instead of being a polygamist, he were a polyandrian.

The so-called civilisation of the negro is from without; he cannot find it within, and he has not the latent mental capacities ascribed to him by the philanthrops. As an adult he is the victim of imitation, the surest sign of deference; he freely accepts foreign customs, manners, and costumes, however incongruous.

---

* It is not a little instructive to see the Southern slaves of Anglo-America, fighting as lustily for slavery as their Northern brethren are contending for liberty, and the more especially so after the dreadful pictures of plunder, rape, and murder drawn upon imagination in Europe, and devoutly expected by the good people of England, until hard facts have forced open their eyes.

† I speak of the people generally, not individually. Personally, each man desires children, and yet he is of opinion that propagation injures his tribe or nation.

The negro, as a rule, despises agriculture, so highly venerated by the Asiatics, Chaldæans, Chinese, Israelites, and Persians, and recognised since the days of Aristotle as the most important of all the sciences. If it flourished amongst the Egyptians, Carthaginians, and Abyssinians, the battle-horses of negromaniacs, these were Semitico-Hamites, the noble blood of Africa. His highest ambition is to be a petty trader, whilst his thick skull, broad bones, and cold porous leathery skin, point him out as a born "hewer of wood and drawer of water."

The cruelty of the negro is, like that of a schoolboy,* the blind impulse of rage combined with want of sympathy. Thus he thoughtlessly tortures and slays his prisoners, as the youth of England torment and kill cats. He fails in the domestication of the lower animals, because he is deficient in forbearance with them:

---

* A sensible French missioner uses the phrase "*Les noirs, qui sont à peine aux blancs ce que sont les enfants aux hommes.*"

in a short time his violence will permanently ruin the temper of a horse; and he will starve to death the English dog, for which perhaps he has paid a high price.*

The negro has never invented an alphabet, a musical scale, or any other element of knowledge. Music and dancing, his passions, are, as arts, still in embryo. He cultivates oratory; and so do all barbarians. He is eternally singing, but he has no idea of poetry.† His painting and statuary are, like his person, ungraceful and grotesque; whilst his art, like his mind, is arrested by the hand of Nature. His year is a rainy season; his moons have no names; and of an hour he has not the remotest conception. His technology consists of weaving, cutting canoes, making rude weapons, and in some places practising a rough metallurgy.

---

* Amongst the traders of the Bight of Biafra there are, I am glad to say, few men so base as to sell an English dog to a negro king or chief; and were a man to do so, he would be loudly blamed by his fellows.

† In Ffon there is a rude kind of assonance, *e. g.* :—

So nun ajilá : Agbanji ajodisá.
Take a thing and show it: on the counter 'twill be sold.

Which Commander Forbes (vol. ii. p. 100), writes with a wondrous waste of "r's."

So wae re jar,
Jorgee
Ah jorgee sar.

The negro, in mass, will not improve beyond a certain point, and that not respectable; he mentally remains a child, and is never capable of a generalisation. Man's character is everywhere, to some extent, the gift of climate. The tropics engender but few wants, exercise is more painful than pleasant, therefore there is little work. Our transition state in Europe has at least this consolation, that we can look forward to a permanent improvement in type; to stocking the world with a higher order of man. But in Africa, before progress can be general, it appears that the negro must become extinct by being absorbed into the negroid.*

The negro is nowhere worse than at home, where he is a curious mixture of cowardice and ferocity. With the barbarous dread and horror of death, he delights in the torments and the destruction of others, and with more than the usual savage timidity, his highest boast is that of heroism.* He is nought but self; he lacks even the rude virtue of hospitality, and ever, as Commander Forbes has it, he "baits with a sprat to catch a mackerel."

---

* Anti-slavery writers claim a concession, that if one negro has shown a character identical with that of the white man, the two families must be specifically the same: and they quote a few "living witnesses," some of whom are so white as hardly to be distinguished from the superior race: others, Mandengas, Joloffs and Hausas. But these may be numbered on a man's fingers out of many a million, and we must not found a law upon exceptions. On the other hand, those who hold the specific difference of the negro, admit of no exceptionary instances. I believe in the inferior genesis of the negro, and in his incapability of improvement, individually and *en masse*.

The negro, in his wild state, makes his wives work;† he will not, or rather he cannot, labour, except by individual compulsion, as in the Confederate States; or by necessity, as in the Barbadoes. When so compelled, he labours well, and he becomes civilised and humanised to the extent of his small powers. When not compelled, as S'a Leone and Jamaica prove, he becomes degraded, debauched, and depraved.‡ I conclude, therefore, with Franklin the philosopher, that the negro is still, as he has been for the last 4000 years, best when "held to labour" by better and wiser men than himself.

The removal of the negro from Africa is like sending a boy to school; it is his only chance of improvement, of learning that there is something more in life than drumming and dancing, talking and singing, drinking and killing. After a time, colonists returned to Africa may exert upon the continent an effect for which we have as yet vainly looked.

---

* The learned and acute Dr. Pruner Bey asserts, "The negro has no love for war; he is only driven to it by hunger. War, from passion or destructiveness, is unknown to him." My personal experience has ever found destructiveness highly developed in the negro's character.

† Barbot (Book iv. chap. 5) says of Benin: "But the female sex is there, in a most peculiar way, so brisk, jolly, and withal so laborious, that they despatch all their work very fast, and with a seeming pleasure and satisfaction."

‡ Of the Sierra Leone people at Whydah, now extinct, see Mr. Duncan (Vol. 1, p. 139).

These last two items state merely bald facts, whatever be the deductions from them. They by no means involve recognising the abstract lawfulness of slavery, or the right of one human being to possess and sell another. It is quite a different question to "defend the employment of the negroes, as domestic working animals, by higher organised beings called *men*." Still less do they affect to justify the horrors of slave driving, and of slave transporting, together with the permanent injury to the African continent, which the modern pro-slavery writers that have of late cropped up, slur over or ignore.*

It must be remembered, however, that almost all races have had, in religion and policy, human sacrifice and servitude; that the latter is the first step taken by human society, and that without it no people, from the Jews to the Brazilians, has ever risen above mere savagery. This great principle is not eliminated from the earlier acts of the social drama, till the hereditary bondsman has acquired power to free himself. The stage following slavery is the *begar*, *corvée* or compulsory labour—and this co-exists with the highest known refinement. An Act of Parliament in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, compelled married women till thirty and spinsters till forty, to do service to the country, if they had no other visible means of living. We imprison, punish, and compel to labour our beggars and vagabonds, even if they fail to prove how they subsist. We force our children to attend schools; and, until lately, we have flogged youths of fourteen and fifteen who are to the full as intellectual as the child-man negro; and the son of a king in England is not, until twenty-one years old, as politically free as the Anglo-African of S'a Leone. I see no objection to render liberated labour forcible* until the African race is educated for wages, and such habits are not learned in a day.

---

* I allude more particularly to a pamphlet called "The Slavery Quarrel, &c.," by a Poor Peacemaker. London: Robert Hardwicke, 1863. It is a specimen of what is to come.

---

* Even in 1845, Mr. Duncan (Vol. I. p. 115), was bold enough to advocate the "free transportation of slaves from the coast of Africa."

Nations are poor judges of one another; each looks upon itself as an exemplar to the world, and vents its philanthropy by forcing its infallible system or systems upon its neighbour. How long is it since popular literature has began to confess that the British Constitution is not quite fit for the whole human race, and that the Anglo-Saxon has much to do at home before he sets out a-colonelling to regenerate mankind? Not later than 1849, the "inevitable conclusion" went forth that "African commerce and African civilisation must be entrusted exclusively to men of African birth.*

Africa's great present want is an organised system of *bonâ fide* emigration. Doubtless the experiment which lately has failed, with a disgrace equalling the coolie-trade from Assam and Cachar in 1861-2, is full of difficulty. But as time runs on there will be no reason why it should not succeed, and become one of the national regenerators.

---

* "The Negro Trade," by Sir George Stephen: the offensive tone of this pamphlet arises from its having been written for a "Review." Long before its day, Messrs. Buxton and MacQueen declared that "it is by African hands and African exertions, chiefly, that the evil [slave trade] must be destroyed." I know only one part of the outer West African coast which is at present perfectly free from the export, and that is the Bight of Biafra, which certainly was cleared by English hands and English exertions.

The opinions of Dahome touching slave export, are those learned from us in the seventeenth century, when England fought for the monopoly. They cannot master the change of sentiments in the nineteenth century, when the prized privilege is denounced as a sin,—a crime,—a *causa belli*,—the "sum of all villanies." I am induced to quote in its entirety the fourteenth chapter of the History, which may enlighten many upon the true state of things in Dahome.* The King, it will be observed, expresses himself with shrewdness, and even with wisdom; but in these lands the rulers are mostly a century in advance of their subjects:†

---

* Adahoonzou the Second's (Sinmenkpen) speech upon hearing what had passed in England upon the subject of the slave trade. (See note at the end of this chapter.) The most important part of it is confirmed by Dr. M'Leod (p. 65), who states: "The performance of the annual sacrifice is considered a duty so sacred, that no allurement in the way of gain—no additional price which the white traders can offer for slaves,—will induce the King to spare even a single victim of the established number; and he is equally inexorable with respect to the chiefs of his enemies, who are never, on any account, permitted to live if they fall into his hands."

† When King Gezo was lectured by Mr. Duncan upon the cruelty of slave exportation, the latter, to illustrate the barbarity of separating children from their parents, "pointed out a she-goat with two kids, and asked him, if one were taken away, whether the young would not show symptoms of regret as well as the mother. At this he laughed heartily, but remarked that the he-goat, the father of the kids referred to, would feel quite indifferent." Mr. Duncan could not help smiling in return, when the King touched his forehead with his fingers, saying, "English-

nor is there any deficiency of cunning in the words of the present monarch to Commodore Wilmot (Appendix III). His polite expression, "I will abolish slave trade, and gladly, but give me another and a better traffic," merely means that Dahome will never cease selling her captives and criminals till she can employ them more profitably. And it must be owned, that her system of dealing with offenders contrasts favourably in simplicity and in economy with ours.

The *institution honnie*, however, is one of the causes of Dahoman decline. This negro race cannot, I have said, render conquests a source of aggrandisement: they make war to lay waste, capture and destroy, and the present king prefers two slave hunts to his father's one per annum.

At Whydah, in 1694, we are told that the price of a good "Kanumo" or slave was equal to £3 15*s.* in goods; "Mackrons," or unmerchantable articles, not being accepted. The price is now, including the Custom

---

man wonderful and a good man." Probably, the royal cynic meant this compliment much as the "good young man" signifies in the mouth of a fast young "party." Mr. Duncan, however, rightly says of Gezo, as compared with the mob, "The King possesses talent far beyond the generality of his subjects; in fact, his noble mind seems to have been formed to govern."

House fee, £16 16*s.*, and the chattel is not so sound. The annual number exported from Dahome cannot be higher than 15,000, which represents a paltry sum of £250,000.

Were it not for the southward progress of El Islam, the slow and silent, but sure advance of the Perfect Cure, the future of negro Africa would not be bright. The experience of three centuries teaches us, that as a rule the tropical continent cannot be colonised by Europeans. We have also learned that hitherto maritime intercourse with its *aqua mortis* and *bouches à feu* has done nothing but degenerate the native, and that until the long day when the Guinea Commanders—of whom bluff old Phillips wrote, "their words and promises are the last to be depended upon of any I know use the sea; for they would deceive their fathers in their trade if they could"—shall become "virtuous," such will continue to be the result. The much talked of "reflux of the West upon the East" has yet to begin doing good: hitherto, as a rule, the semi-civilized negroes, like the S'a Leone people at Abeokuta, when restored to old influences have proved themselves worse than the heathenry. They have almost to a man displayed the blackest and most odious form of ingratitude, that which does not merely ignore benefits conferred, but which bitterly hates the benefactor for having conferred them. It is a generation of vipers that found its way from the Red Grave to Lagos and Undestone.

NOTE.

ADAHOONZOU'S SPEECH.

As a proof that Adahoonzou was not at a loss for arguments to defend the conduct of himself and his predecessors, when necessary, we shall close that prince's history with the heads of a speech made by him upon an occasion which is about to be taken notice of, and which took up *two hours* in the delivery, for the Dahomans *are extremely verbose*.* Governor † Abson having taken an opportunity of communicating to Adahoonzou some of the particulars respecting the slave trade, which had become the subject of conversation and parliamentary inquiry in this country; and having carried with him some of the pamphlets for and against the abolition of that traffic, which he read to him, in

---

* If Mr. Abson supposes long speeches are confined to Europe and Africa he is mistaken: the Brazilians were famous for this species of rhetoric long ago. When they wished to excite their people to war, their Eldermen, from their hammocks, harangued their auditors on the virtues and wrongs of their ancestors for six hours together.—"Purchas Pilgrims," 1036.

† The present Governor of Williams Fort, who has resided there since 1766, and is well acquainted with the language.

Adahoonzou's native language, the King listened with great attention, and though business several times broke in upon the narration, still requested Mr. Abson, after every interruption, to proceed. When the whole was finished, the King spoke as follows:—

"I admire the reasoning of the white men, but with all their sense it does not appear that they have thoroughly studied the nature of the blacks, whose disposition differs as much from that of the whites as their colour. The same great Being formed both; and since it hath seemed convenient for Him to distinguish mankind by opposite complexions, it is a fair conclusion to presume that there may be as great a disagreement in the qualities of their minds. There is likewise a remarkable difference between the countries which we inhabit. You Englishmen, for instance, as I have been informed, are surrounded by the ocean, and, by this situation, seem intended to hold communication with the whole world, which you do by means of your ships; whilst we Dahomans, being placed on a large continent, and hemmed in amidst a variety of other people, of the same complexion, but speaking different languages, are obliged, by sharpness of our swords, to defend ourselves from their incursions, and punish the depredations they make on us. Such conduct in them is productive of incessant wars. Your countrymen, therefore, who allege that we go to war for the purpose of supplying your ships with slaves, are grossly mistaken. You think you can work a reformation, as you call it, in the manners of the blacks; but you ought to consider the disproportion between the magnitude of the two countries, and then you would soon be convinced of the difficulties that must be surmounted to change the system of such a vast country as this. We know you are a brave people, and that you might bring over a great many of the blacks to your opinions, by the points of your bayonets; but to effect this, a great many must be put to death, and numerous cruelties must be committed, which we do not find to have been the practice of the whites; besides that, this would militate against the very principle which is professed by those who wish to bring about a reformation.

"In the name of my ancestors and myself, I aver that no Dahoman man ever embarked in war merely for the sake of procuring wherewithal to purchase your commodities. I, who have not been long master of this country, have, without thinking of the market, *killed many thousands*, and I shall kill many thousands more. When policy or justice requires that men be put to death, neither silk, nor coral, nor brandy, nor cowries, can be accepted as substitutes for the blood that ought to be spilt for example' sake. Besides, if white men choose to remain at home, and no longer visit this country for the same purpose that has usually brought them hither, will black men cease to make war? I answer, by no means. And if there be no ships to receive their captives, what will become of them? I answer for you, they will be put to death. Perhaps you may ask, how will the blacks be furnished with guns and powder? I reply by another question: Had we not clubs, and bows and arrows before we knew white men? Did you not see me make Custom for Weebaigah, the third King of Dahome? and did you not observe, on the day such ceremony was performing, that I carried a bow in my hand, and a quiver filled with arrows on my back? These were emblems of the times, when, with such weapons, that brave ancestor fought and conquered all his neighbours. God made war for all the world; and every kingdom, large or small, has practised it more or less, though perhaps in a manner unlike and upon different principles. Did Weebaigah sell slaves? *No, his prisoners were all killed to a man!* What else could he have done with them? Was he to let them remain in his country, to cut the throats of his subjects? This would have been wretched policy, indeed, which, had it been adopted, the Dahoman name would have been long ago extinguished, instead of becoming, as it is at this day, the terror of surrounding nations. What hurts me most is, that some of your people have maliciously represented us in books, which never die, alleging that we sell our wives and children for the sake of procuring a few kegs of brandy. No, we are shamefully belied; and I hope you will contradict, from my mouth, the scandalous stories that have been propagated, and tell posterity that we have been abused. We do, indeed, sell to the white men a part of our prisoners, and we have a right so to do. Are not all prisoners at the disposal of their captors? and are we to blame if we send delinquents to a far country? I have been told you do the same. If you want no more slaves from us, why cannot you be ingenuous, and tell the plain truth, saying that the slaves you have already purchased are sufficient for the country for which you bought them; or that the artists who used to make fine things are all dead, without having taught anybody to make more? But for a parcel of men with long heads to sit down in England, and frame laws for us, and pretend to dictate how we are to live, of whom they know nothing—never having been in a black man's country during the whole course of their lives—is to me somewhat extraordinary. No doubt they must have been biassed by the report of some one who has had to do with us; who, for want of a true knowledge of the treatment of slaves, found that they died on his hands, and that his money was lost; and seeing others thrive by the traffic, he, envious of their good luck, has vilified both black and white traders.

"You have seen me kill many men at the Customs, and you often observed delinquents at Grigwee, and others of my provinces, tied and sent up to me—I kill them; but do I ever insist on being paid for them? Some heads I order to be placed at my door; others to be strewed about the market-place, that people may stumble on them when they little expect such a sight. This gives a grandeur to my Customs, far beyond the display of fine things which I buy. This makes my enemies fear me, and gives me such a name in the bush.* Besides, if I should neglect this indispensable duty, would my ancestors suffer me to live? Would they not trouble me day and night, and say that I sent nobody to serve them; that I was only solicitous about my own name, and forgetful of my ancestors? White men are not acquainted with these circumstances; but I now tell you that you may hear, and know and inform your countrymen why Customs are made, and will be made, as long as black men continue to possess their own country. The few that can be spared from this necessary celebration, we sell to the white men. And happy, no doubt, are such, when they find themselves on the path for Grigwee, to be disposed of to the Europeans. 'We shall still drink water,'* say they to themselves; 'white men will not kill us, and we may even avoid punishment, by serving our new masters with fidelity.'"

---

* The country expression for the woods.

"All this, and much more to the same purpose," adds Mr. Abson, "was said by the Dahoman monarch, in my presence, however incredible it may appear in England;" and I can see no reason to doubt it, unless we suppose that common sense is confined within narrower limits than experience shows it to be.

---

* Meaning "We shall still live."

CHAPTER XX.

THE DAY OF TRIUMPH.

On Wednesday, January 20, we were suddenly summoned in the hot sun of 2 P.M. to the Komasi Palace. As we sat under the south-eastern corner shade we were greeted with El Afiyah by our companions in misfortune, the Moslems, who wore their usual snowy turbans and long white and blue robes. Men in war tunics and wrappers hurried to the palace, and strings of women were coming out all dust, showing that they had been made over as wives to new captains.

We entered and sat down as usual beneath the thin tamarind tree, opposite the huge whitewashed storehouse. Everything was very military: the King's verandah was a line of poor, sooty, and tattered umbrellas, and before us were four similar, also blackened: one of these was for the fetishmen, whose ten iron sticks were planted in the ground. Opposite them, and on our side—the left—were seven umbrellas, and within the bamboos stood the Fanti women fresh returned from the campaign. They were in fighting garb, with white fillets round their heads, short drawers, brown war tunics like the men's, and not longer than kilts, girt with white sashes and kept in position by cartridge boxes, with brilliant pouches on their left sides, bright muskets, razors and knives. Their ornaments were necklaces, projecting *glorias* of brown monkey skins, quantities of fetish beads, talismans and other decorations about their breasts, and brass and iron rings on their left arms. They were commanded by Danh-ji-hun-to, a thin, yellow, middle-aged woman, with a hoarse voice and wearing two diminutive antelope horns on her forehead.

At 4.25 P.M. a long line of unarmed men ran up, in Indian file, and deposited near the bamboo barrier fifteen little bundles of coarse matting. They were followed by four loads of calabashes, a bit of broken canoe, a sheep and a goat carried in arms, nine old muskets and other equally valuable trophies, which were ranged by the gallant captors in a semi-circle before the King. Silence was proclaimed by a knot of some eighty fighteresses and wives, who sat together in the open air on the right of the throne, with their "drum," three small rattles, and one cymbal, on their proper left. The front rank wore silver horns; each waved a fly-flapper when singing, and the handles of their long knives were hung with pink streamers. Behind them were successively silver hair, spangles, white fillets, and red nightcaps, placed loosely on the heads of the blunderbuss women to keep off the sun. One had the true sweep's face, with cherry lips, and glaring white eyes set in deep circles of black. All the *troupe* squatted on their heels, kneeling up when the emphasis of the song required it.

The fat Adanejan opened the speeching: the gist of his lengthiness was, that Eddon, chief of Jabatan, a town of Makhi-speaking Nagos in Agoni, about one day beyond Iketu, had ever been a spy and a malignant, sending in reports to the King's enemy, Abeokuta. The place had been taken after six shots; there were few prisoners, as all the men ran away, consequently the captors had proved themselves poor soldiers. The mat bundles, then opened, disclosed human skulls imperfectly cleaned, some being only smoke-dried. One was much shattered, and another had part of the green scalp adhering to the bone. It was a shabby display compared with the days when, after an attack on Badagry, Sinmenkpen (Adahoonzou II.) bought of his men 6000 crania.

The four skulls "with names" were then presented by the Adanejan as Chabi the second chief, a Vodun-no or fetish woman, and Favi and Adibi, two princes. Followed the live male prisoners of distinction. They were naked to the waist, which was wrapped in blue calico, and they knelt, with hands tied before and elbows connected behind by a lanyard, which was held by a soldier, also on his knees. At each presentation a servant of the Adanejan placed both hands upon the captive's shoulders, standing behind him, and called out his name and rank, which were repeated to the King by a high officeress. The following fourteen were presented: First were three boys; Eddon the chief, a miserably lean scowling man, who will certainly lose his head, and Doicha Vodun-no, his brother; three princes, Legbo, Bwedon, and Yabi; a hunter and a chief drummer: Chago, a boy, one of the chief's nephews, three small children, black, yellow, and brown; and three sons of hunters, Bosu, Akholu, and Bosan. After presentation, they were all led away by the men.

A violent drumming introduced nine women "with names," as follows: Chago, Epwe, Ayinan, and Ede, wives of the chief—the third very old, the last aged about ten; Meneke and Yabu, hunters' wives; Loko-si, a hunter's sister; Nyon, a Tansi-no, or fetish woman for the King; and Ojohon, the daughter of a chief long ago slain. Behind them stood several others, who were not named. The women captives, including one with a babe at the breast, born on the march—

> O Lucina ferox, hoc peperisse fuit?

—were led away by the women troops.

After this function, two boys and two girls were brought in from left to right, were placed kneeling before and were presented as gifts to the King. These the first fruits of the capture, are never bound till in the royal presence: they are technically called So-si or Thunder-tail.* After this customary ceremony, the messengeresses took the end of the long tether connected with each small left arm, and conducted the tribute into the harem.

---

* So (thunder, or heavy firing of guns), sí (a tail; not to be confounded with 'sì for assì, a wife). The animal's tail is the hunter's trophy, and he always removes it the first.

Five soldier-prisoners were next placed on their knees, and were named like the captives ; one had lost his gun, another had tied up his sword in a bundle, a third had no gunpowder, a fourth no ball, and the last had drawn the royal ammunition without bringing back either head or prisoner. The recreants were huddled away to jail, and their sentence was confirmed by prolonged "Ububu," from the male, and "Khe" on the part of the feminine soldiery.

The Addugba drum then struck up. It is played by public women, an organised and royal institution, appointed from the palace, and placed under the Meu for the comfort and refreshment of the lieges.[*] The present king has appointed a fresh troops of ladies of pleasure, but they have not as yet received permission to practise. At first the *honorarium* was twenty cowries ; hence the common title "Ko-si," score-wife or *quadrantaria* :[†] at the representation of the ministers the *solatium* was increased to two strings, or fourfold. They drum during the day at the royal abode, and late at night they return to their own quarters, near the Bwekon village and the Agbome Gate. There are peculiarities about the institution which will presently strike the reader.

---

[*] So far Dahome is in advance of us. We now begin to see the advantage of Lock Hospitals for the soldier, when every man of sense recognized it years ago.

[†] Ko-si is not insulting ; Agaleto, or *buona roba*, is ; Agaleto-vi—filius meretricis—is a common abusive phrase.

The Addugba, "for outside," consisted of four men and two women, the latter standing behind with veiled bosoms, blue pagnes, and white fillets: they used as fans discs of thin brass, pierced with holes and surmounting long light handles. Their leader had a leathern apron, after the fashion of the Lake Regions, but lined and streaked with cowries. There were also the Ko-si, or *quadrantariæ*, "for inside," an amount of cynicism, which I had hardly expected. This internal Addugba stood behind the warrioresses on the left of the throne, and wore red headkerchiefs, and white and scarlet tunics, with lines of yellow cloth, under blue pagnes. The men knelt and performed in presence of the King. The Adanejan now brought forward a sixth prisoner, and explained his offence, deserting to Iketu, and attempting to join Jabatan. This caitiff was also led off by his rope.

Shouts and trills announced that cowries and cloth were being brought from the palace. Each owner of a skull received for it a head of shells (equal to two shillings),* and the grisly semi-circle broke up. The fetishers sang :—

E Bo-hun e degi.
The Bo-drum (of war), it is very good !

All the captives "with names" advanced on their knees up a lane leading towards the King, and formed by ministers on one side and by captains on the other. Their cords were held by their captors, who sold them to the Crown. The minimum price was one head and two fathoms of cloth : an old woman with children in her arms, and presently led off to the harem, fetched the maximum, a large cloth and two heads and a half. All except a small child, that cried a little with fear, showed the utmost stoicism. The captors were then, with the usual ceremonies, invested by the ministers ; and each cloth was acknowledged with cries, to the soft sounds of flageolets and the tinkling of cymbals. The prisoners "without names" were then sold. Finally, the chief Eddon and his brother Doicha were placed kneeling before the throne. His lucky captor, "Kiko," a young captain, after ample praise from the King as a warman that had brought in three skulls, received, by various instalments, a total of sixteen heads and a long white cloth. The capturer of the chief's brother received a pink pagne.

---

* In the History, the utmost price of a skull is twenty ackies of cowries, or thirty shillings ; of a captive, thirty-two cabess, cabeça, or head of cowries, equal to £16.

Divers decorated men now came hastily forward with war-axes and "blue knives." One youth declared that he would slay eighty, others forty of the foe, and others still more moderately: at the end of this boasting all prostrated and shovelled up the dust. "Ago" proclaimed Silence! and the Adanejan told the public, to cries of "Tamulé!" that they must fight bravely against Abeokuta. They clapped hands, received cowries and liquor, and retired. The Gau and five men then made furious speeches about the Egbas, ending with a sand bath, and the King caused villanous cachinnation by declaring that when "spreading a table" for his father he must place Jabatan upon it. To which the lanky chief listened without moving even an eye-lid.

The Blue and afterwards the Fanti Companies rose, and capered from side to side. Four Ananun-wa-hwisu, or "blue knives," were then placed before the King, and a corresponding number of women rushed out grounded muskets, took up the *armes blanches*, and danced like furies. As usual, the men imitated them. It being my turn to give "bakhshish," I wrote a promissory note of 100 dols. for the women and 50 dols. for the men, who have other means of subsistence. The bamboo fence was thrust out, and Gelele came to the fore, dressed in a white fillet and a Mauve-coloured tobe, one woman fanning and another shading him with a red and yellow parasol. We remained seated as he harangued the lieges about my gift, and whilst the heralds shouted his strong names he declared that Abeokuta, being no longer the Englishman's friend, must be broken. After presenting cloth to his new favourite, the Ajyaho, and requesting me to come to-morrow and address my company, he sent to us the usual two flowered-glass caraffes of rum, upon which we soon beat a retreat into the cool moonshine.

At 1 P.M. on Thursday, January 21, we again went to the palace, and found a similar *mise en scène*. About 200 Blues, some with gunpowdered cheeks and forehead, were squatting in a semicircle before the throne: on its right was a knot of about sixty female singers, on its left the same number of Fanti women. The band, with waved hands and loud hums at the end of each strophe, were singing:—

> A dog fetches game for its master;
> So the King brought Ishagga to his father's ghost:

which sounded much like bathos or anti-climax. The ensuing clamour, boasting, presenting arms and fearfully lengthy songs, were sleepy work as well as absurd. That ancient Pistol, Adan-men-nun-kon, strode up and down before the King, shouting Ye-ge! and pretending to weep over the doom of the Egbas, who were eating and drinking, laughing and talking, all heedless of the evil which awaited them. He was unconsciously uttering his own death wail.

Another song, a storm of drums and rattles, and a "blue-knife" dance, summoned the King to perform, which, however, he did not. Two swords and sash-belts sent to the chief's captors, an old musket and powder pouches or cartridge boxes, each worth perhaps a shilling, distributed amongst the less deserving, caused a renewal of saltation and saluting. Two piles of 200 cowrie-heads, surrounded by rum bottles, were heaped up "for woman's side," and "for man's side:" amongst the workwomen we recognised the Yavedo—Mr. Dawson's younger mother—a large black girl, perhaps ten years younger than her son. After more speeches, vows and advice, especially from the Gau, who told the soldiers to prepare provisions so as not to faint on the road, twenty-five kegs* of powder were exhibited as the material for the morrow's firing.

As sunset was approaching, the King summoned me before him to address his guards. I was accompanied by Mr. Cruikshank and by Messrs. Bernasko and Dawson, the "Prince Bah," *alias* Beecham, interpreting. I began by saying that amongst us the officer is answerable when the soldier is unprepared for fight. Our mode of inspecting and examining arms was then shown. Against this nothing could be advanced. I next proposed to place the left hand under the trigger guard, and inserting a knife handle into the barrel muzzle, imitated our original bayonet. The King at once objected, firstly, that it is good for soldiers even in play to run risk, and, secondly, that they were expected to "go in" and "give a touch" with their daggers. He evidently is, or would be, a "*général à dix mille hommes par semaine.*" Of course, nothing remained to say but that every country has its customs; and that amongst us it is, or it ought to be,

---

* The mark was "Kames Mills," probably American sold as English gunpowder, which the King prefers, finding, it is said, too much charcoal in the French.

> "More honourable far *servare*
> *Civem* than slay an adversary."

Being then urged to address the Blues, I exhorted them to talk less and to do more, quoting,

Avun do kho, e do kho, e dume a.
A dog (who) talketh palaver, he talketh palaver, he biteth not.

This the old landlord illustrated by falling on all-fours, and growling like the *canidæ*, which here do not bark.* It being a Dahoman fashion to praise the women at the expense of the men, I told the latter that in our country the feminine gender was garrulous, and the masculine silent, whereas at Agbome the phenomenon was reversed. As Adan-men-nun-kon again violently addressed his monarch, he was told to keep all that energy for the King of Abeokuta. The women, after deriding him, thanked me, through their commanding officer, and next morning came a present of provisions from both companies, with the usual complimentary message that they had sat up all night pondering over the words of wisdom which had fallen from my lips.

---

* In the kingdom of Uganda, north of Unyamwezi, courtiers acknowledge the presence by wallowing and whining like dogs. Here they wallow, but do not whine.

We were summoned on Friday, January 22nd, but business detained the King till sunset, when he accepted an excuse. Saturday also was a day of rest, our notes requiring to be written out. The time slips easily away at Agbome. Rising with the dawn, we set out as soon as the hammock-men can be collected, and walk till 9 A.M. Refection follows till eleven, and my lesson in Ffon outlasts the noon. If we visit the Komasi Palace, the rest of the day will be a blank ; the brain becomes so weary that work in the evening is impossible. If we avoid it, the afternoon is an inverted copy of the forenoon.

CHAPTER XXI.

DAHOME AND HER CAPITAL.

THE extent and population of Danh-ho-men-to ("the Land of Dahome") have been grossly exaggerated. Dr. M'Leod, who never left Whydah, Commander Forbes, and M. Wallon, have assigned to this inconsiderable province of the Great Oyo or Yoruban empire, the wide region between the so-called Kong Mountains on the north, and the Bight of Benin on the south, a depth of two hundred miles. The rivers and lagoons of Lagos, others say the Niger, are made the eastern, while the Volta River and the Ashantis become the western frontier. This gives a breadth of one hundred and eighty, making a total area of 36,000 square miles.

Such boundaries may have been, although I greatly doubt them: now we must reduce Dahome to nearly one-tenth. Her northern frontier, bordering on the

Makhis, is a water called Tevi, eighteen hours of hammock, equal to forty miles, from Agbome, giving a maximum direct distance of one hundred miles. On the north-eastward, beyond the tributary Agoni tribes, are the Iketu and other Nagos or Yorubans, who have been plundered, but never subjected. To the north-westward are the semi-independent races of Aja,* of Attakpame,† and others. The extreme extent, fifty miles, narrows towards the south, giving the province a pyriform shape. The base between Godome or Jackin, the easternmost settlement, and the frontier between Whydah and the turbulent independent Popos, cannot exceed twenty-five to thirty miles. Assuming, therefore, forty miles as the medium breadth, we obtain a superficies of 4000 square miles. Moreover, as has been shown, this small black Sparta is hedged in by hostile accolents. "Porto Novo" and Badagry, to the eastward, have fallen into European hands, whilst the Popo republics, on the west, are safe in their marshes. The people of Agwe "came in" last year, and were received by the King,* but they will add an element of weakness. Dahome will crumble to pieces under the first heavy shock.

---

* The Aja are known by three short cuts on the cheek; the Nago, by three long, with various combinations. There are sundry sub-tribes, as Ajabikome, Ajawachi, and Kpese (the "Peshie" of the History), whence the trade went to the Popo and Quitta countries. They are described as worshipping thunder; a point of resemblance with Yoruba. The French call them Les Barbares.

† The Attahpahms of Commander Forbes. They must not be confounded with the proper Takpas of the powerful Nigerian kingdom Nufe. In Mr. Norris' map they are made to extend to the north-west of Agbome. I have met amongst the slaves and bush women lower lips pierced to admit a bit of coral, and when asking the tribe, was generally answered "Takpas."

The numbers assigned to the kingdom vary greatly, and are all guess-work. Commander Forbes proposes 200,000; M. Wallon raises it to 900,000; Commodore Wilmot reduces it to 180,000, which I would further diminish to 150,000,† of whom, perhaps, four-fifths are women and children. The population is thus not a third of what the land could support. The annual withdrawal of both sexes from industry to slave-hunting and the Customs at the capital, the waste of reproduction in Amazons, and the losses by disease and defeat, have made the country in parts a desert.

---

* This took place before the Komasi Palace, when Commander Wilmot was at the capital. The head men, with their wives, came up and made obeisance, after which the whole deputation received presents of rum, cloth, and cowries. Finally they were dismissed to their homes, with leave to live in peace and quiet till wanted by the King for war.

† I judge this from the numerical force of the armies. The disproportion of sexes is caused by polygamy, and the greater risk and exposure of the men.

So contemptible is the African Power which is perhaps the best known throughout Europe! And so strong is eccentricity to attract notice!

Agbome first appears upon the stage of history in 1724, and since that time there has been a regular intercourse between England and Dahome, which has now a small literature of her own.* The *enceinte* of the capital is perhaps larger than that of any other Ffon town, but the population certainly does not exceed that of Whydah. It is, of course, floating, and perhaps at times may have reached the figures assigned to it by Commodore Wilmot—20,000 souls. The site, like that of Allada, is a rolling plain or plateau — these people ever prefer high ground—ending in short bluffs to the north-west, where it is bounded by a long depression,† suggesting the action of eluvium, grassy, and streaked with lines of trees, where water must lie, if not flow, in the wet season. Scattered over this hollow are the principal pans which scantily supply the city. Beyond the valley the country again rises towards the Makhi Hills, whose jagged blue summits look enticingly mysterious to the traveller. Amongst them, Minefin and Bowule* are described by the people as high, cold, and abounding in game, especially wild hog: their land wind is cooling and healthy. These hills, which may be considered the threshold of the so-called Kong region, supply the granitic and schistose stones used by the people for grinding grain. A glance at the map shows that between the Benin Gulf and the Niger the land is prismoidal, with a long southern slope, and a shorter northern counter-slope to the Great River.

---

* See "History of Dahomy" (pp. 20, 28). Forbes, "Dahomey and Dahomans" (vol. i. pp. 4, 5), and preface to those volumes.

† Not a "deep ravine," as Commander Forbes calls it.

Let us now circumambulate the *enceinte* of Agbome, which has already been partially described. Beginning from the southern, or Ako-chyo Gate, which issues upon the Komasi Palace and the adjacent suburb of Bwe-kon, about one mile leads us to the Kana-'gbonun, or eastern gate, by which we first entered the city. The land between them is grassy, dotted with palms, and showing by its ridges that the hoe was once active. Crossing the village of little fetish huts at the Kana Gate, we bend northwards, leaving to the right a path leading to the Kido, or north-eastern water-pits. The country continues the same, and amongst the few farmsteads we are shown Dokon, or Addokon, the Yevogan's hereditary village. Hugging the "zun," or acacia bush of the moat, we pass a hole pierced through it where the side is shallowest. Here begins a double line of circumvallation, protecting the settlement from the north-east to the north-west, including the principal waters, especially the King's, and probably intended as a defence against an equestrian enemy.* The extreme distance between the false and the true *enceintes* is more than a mile, and the interval is overgrown with bush and grass, with here and there a hut or a dwarf field. If we follow the outer line of ditch, the path falls, by a succession of steps, with outcrops of ironstone, into the valley between Agbome and the Makhi Mountains. On the way, four or five tall trees, which here distinguish the moat entrances, point out the Tohun-'gbonun,† or north-western gate, in the false *enceinte*. It is a small and poor approach, leading to a water called Nyassa.

---

* Possibly the "Boagry" of the History, which the map places W.N.W. of Agbome. Mr. Duncan (Vol. I. chap. 1) calls it "Gboowolley."

---

* We read in the History that when the Oyos attacked Agaja the Conqueror at Agbome, and were repulsed by him, they filled the deep moat in the hurry of their flight, and thus made a bridge for the others to escape by.

† To (stream), and hun (the hole whence it issues). According to some, "Tohun" is a proper name.

Crossing, however, the ditch before reaching the Tohun-'gbonun we pursue a goat-track through grass, wild egg-plants, and neglected plantations, leaving on our right, or northwards, the first slope of the great depression. After ten minutes we reach the Agesi-'gbonun,* or northern gap, opening upon the direct road to the Diddo or royal water, and upon a path bending N.-East to the Nyassa pans. Opposite us the north-western arm of the false *enceinte* is crossed by the Alo-ma-bli-nen-'gbonun,† built by King Gezo. If we would avoid this, we pass through the Agesi-'gbonun into the *enceinte*, when a few yards conduct us to a shrubby and apparently unguarded gap, the Tavosa-'gbonun :‡ it opens to the N.-West, and the moat is spanned by a clay dyke with a steep sag. Resuming from this point our walk, after ten minutes of peasants' path through neglected fields, we find the Agbo-e-ja-ga,§ which conducts to the palace of Tegbwesun (Bossa Ahadi). Here begins the large exterior suburb, stretching from the N.-West, and spreading over the country to the S.-West. Agbome, like other cities, is "going out of town;" and the newer is decidedly the cleaner and the prettier locality. In this part the *faubourg* is called Adan-do-kpo-ji. Passing *en route* the Lise-hun-zo or palace of Sinmenkpen (Adahoonzou II.), lying south of the former, we find under fine trees a Nesu-hwe, or Nesu temple, fronting a clear and cleaned space. A little beyond it lies a large double gate, the Adan-do-kpo-ji, through which the King passes when visiting the manes of his ancestors. The suburb here straggles out, and on all sides appear farms and plantations of palm trees, which, however, grow better inside the *enceinte*, where they are not scorched by bush fires. Near the entrance is another Adan-blon-no-ten, an open space where the King sits and swears: a gateless passage over the moat, known as the E-Oyo-nagba-'gbonuṇ,* connects it with the southern extremity of the inner town and with the Kpo-go-e-ji,† a broad street near the Komasi Palace, where a few market wives daily assemble to sell cankey and other provisions. There is a similar out-door bazaar near the Agbome Palace, called the Kechli-'li, or "road of Kechi," a

---

* So called from some individual.

† Alo (hand), má (don't), bli (roll), nen (virility)—a queer name for a gate.

‡ Tavosa, also a proper name.

§ Agbo (gate), e (he), ja-ga (goes out), *i.e.*, the outward-leading gate.

---

* Said to be a proper name, meaning He will break down Oyo.

† Interpreted Palm roof-tree corner.

Whydah caboceer. Continuing our southerly course under a Vo-sisa or Afa charm to prevent disease, in the shape of a gallows furnished with a dead dog, hung head downwards, we reach the Uhun-jro market, and the Ako-chyo-'gbonun, where our walk began. Each king builds his own gate at the time when he is allowed to raise a palace of swish. Thus the total number, including the Tohun-'gbonun and the Alo-ma-bli-nen-gbonun, the sister entrances through the false *enceinte*, and not including the gap, is eight. The circumambulation required two hours, equal to five miles.*

To one walking round the inner *enceinte*, Agbome appears even to less advantage. The aggerose surface is pitted with the deep holes common in Yoruba towns: these earth diggings are alternately filled with offals, with foul vegetation—especially the unwholesome croton plant (*Croton Tiglium*)—and with water, and mud, the latter drying, as in Whydah, to the consistency of common ashlar. The circumference cannot be more than four miles, occupying an hour and a-half; two-thirds of it is a fine open country, scattered with trees and fields of bean and vetch, mostly choked by dense grasses veiling the ancient furrows. To the west and south-west, the buildings cluster thickest, and *latrinæ* being unknown, the ground about them is very foul, the Mosaic precept being utterly neglected.* Agbome is as truly Dahoman as Washington is or was United States,—a typical place. Somewhat like old and despotic Cairo, it is a mass of villages, which under any but the present barbarians would soon grow to be a city. When inspected, however, the composing elements are found to be the palace carcases and a few large establishments belonging to the principal officers and their retainers. The conspicuous feature in the town is the Agbome House, a rude circle, measuring, if we cut off the various angles, 2560 paces in circumference. The gates of the Queens are, as has been seen, in the north and north-western walls: those of the Kings are in the eastern and southern sides. Amongst the most conspicuous of these are the Patin-sa, the Han-ho-nukun-ji,† the Agringo-men, the Cowrie House, the Akwaji, the Singbo-men, and the Adan-jro-ko-de, which some writers have confused into different palaces;—they have all been alluded to in previous pages. To the north of the Agbome, as was said, is the venerable but decrepid Dahome House, and around both are the "compounds" of the chiefs, miniature copies of the royal abodes and jealously separated by bush and trees for privacy and in fear of fire. To the south-west of the Agbome palace is a thick clump of houses, extending to the town ditch, and divided only by the Uhun-jro market-place from the Komasi House. The two royal houses in the Adan-do-kpo-ji are also surrounded by compounds, and the same may be said of the Bwe-kon-hwe-gbo and the Jegbe Palaces.

---

* Commodore Wilmot says, "probably seven miles round," but this was not after actual inspection.

---

* Deut. xxiii. 13.

† The words mean Han (sing), ho (speak), nukun (eyes), ji (top, or upon).

The great drawback at Agbome during the dry season, is the deficiency and the badness of the water. An Artesian well, or at least a Bletonist, would be a boon. As a rule the supply is white with clay, and must be a fertile source of dysentery. Often it is chalybeate; and, at the best, it is stagnant. For some reason, superstitious or despotic, the lieges are not allowed to dig wells; perhaps the gravelly nature of the soil, and the depth of excavation required, would place the operation beyond their powers. Supplies must be fetched, therefore, by the Sin-no, or water wives, from the great depression bounding the town-plateau to the north and north-west, where it is found in shallow pits, pans, and holes cut near the larger pools to filter the element. As the nearest habitations are distant two, and the farthest five, miles from these *abreuvoirs*, the path is trodden day and night with heavy monotonous toil. Those who want the water anywhere near the royal supply must begin early, the women of the palace issuing after dawn, and keeping all clear for themselves. Male Dahomans have lately been forbidden the road to Diddo, the King's water; holding ourselves, however, not included in this prohibition, Mr. Cruikshank and I resolved to visit it.

Setting out at four on a misty morning, with two "Naureo," * but without interpreter or hammocks, we already found a thin string of carriers on the way. After the Agesi-'gbonun, or northern gate, we skirted the western arc of the false ditch, and presently fell into the slope of the great depression. The ground was disposed in little steps, ridges, and sheets of the usual reddish and large-pored iron-clay stone, congested as if fused. Half-an-hour's walk from the city led us to a thick bush, garnished with huge trees, and the tremendous din of women who were baling water with calabashes into their jars, told us that we had arrived at our destination. Some wretches, wearied out, were sleeping in the cleared places, with pots by their sides, and there had been many breakages. The principal pits are on the left of the arenose path; they are cleaner than those of Nyassa and Kido, which show an offensive scum, whilst the surrounding swamp savours of decay. After our inspection we followed the northern road, till we reached a house built across it, and occupied by Jabwa, warden of the wells. Beyond this point, but turning to the right, before entering the bush, there is another water called Danh-to-men.*

---

* Here Krumen are so called from the words signifying "good morning" in their tongue; we left the hammock-men, whose perpetual fear of punishment after our departure would have laboured hard to mislead us.

The "Minister of the Interior" is badly supplied at Agbome, and the provisions are dearer even than at Whydah. Prices have quadrupled during the last six years, the effects of an ultra-military policy; and very often, as in a famine, no inducement will make men part with their store. We tasted beef once only during our stay; the Tsetse fly abounds, I believe, in the bush, but in the towns black cattle are plentiful, a small bullock fetching 10 dols. to 16 dols. The mutton and goat's-flesh are equally lean, stringy, and tasteless, and the whole animal must be bought; the sheep costing 2 dols., or half the price of its more odoriferous congener. Pigs are worth more than goats; in the palace they are purely fed, elsewhere they find themselves. I never saw horseflesh, which was eaten of old. Dried fish is sometimes sent up from the sea-board. Turkeys, rare at Kana and Agbome, fetch 1 dol. 50 cents.; Guinea fowls and Manilla ducks, half-a-crown; and poor thin pullets, two shillings each. Poultry, however, is seldom to be bought, especially at the present season, when they are being sacrificed by order of Afa. There are also a few pigeons. Eggs are not sold, perhaps under the conviction that they will fetch more as pullets—when obtainable they are worth 8 cents. per dozen. Milk is not used,* and animals seem to labour under a natural agalaxy.

---

* Danh (snake, or rainbow), to (water, sea, pool, or stream, opposed to sin, drinking water), and men (in).

There are, as has been said, four large and many smaller markets. At the latter, the principal sale seems to be of water, grain, vegetables, and a few fruits; the former is sold in pots, of various sizes, and, according to quality, commands, at this season, from a halfpenny to a penny per gallon. The cankey-ball (Dahome's quartern loaf) fetched, under the old king, three cowries—it is now worth twelve. The principal, if not the only, grains are maize and Guinea-corn, whose manifold preparations have been alluded to. The vegetables are beans and vetches, of various kinds; yams, tolerable; groundnuts, common; sweet potatoes, plentiful at Whydah, rare here; manioc, sold boiled as well as raw; ferine, *i.e.*, farinha, "wood-meal,"* much used at Agbome and Whydah; and many kinds of greens, especially the excellent occro, or esculent *Hibiscus*, locally called "Fevi," or "Nye'un;" while chives, or small onions, are sold in every bazaar. The fruits are oranges, mostly bitter, except those in the royal gardens; plantains and papaws in plantations; limes, somewhat acerb; cashews and rare cocoas; mangoes, guavas, and wild pine-apples, which, wanting water, run to leaf. The tamarind is everywhere disregarded, even in the King's house. The ginger is very poor. A little sugar and salt can be bought or borrowed, red pepper is abundant, and the black variety is unknown. As has been said, all the liquor is of the vilest, and the traveller should land at Whydah, where even beer is often unprocurable, with all his stores. It may be said of the Dahoman as of "poor Paddy," that he

---

* Dr. M'Leod (1803) found "milk used as food, a custom not generally practised on any other part of the south-west coast of this continent." In his day, cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry were exceptionally plentiful.

---

* The root is ground as potatoes for starch: it is again sun-dried, and partially ground to the consistence of oatmeal, when it can be eaten dry or with water.

> "On basest food pours down the vilest drink."

There are small patches of small-boled cotton, in the town, giving false promise of better things to men of strong faith. The wild indigo is sold in cakes, and is the common cloth-dye of the country; its colour is excellent, but no amount of demand would produce a regular supply here.

The list of animals in Dahome is not extensive. Elephants have been killed out, lions are known only by name; hyænas—the local "resurrection men"—and bush-cats are common. The people are fond of porcupines, hares, and of a large grey and sometimes dark-brown rodent, called by Mr. Norris "Agouti," and formerly by the blacks "Cabra do matto."* It is killed by a trap falling upon it, split, skewered, and carbonadoed with the skin on. An average specimen brings a head of cowries, and the flesh, as cooked by the natives, is good; I never saw a live specimen. Small antelopes are found in the bush surrounding the capital, and it shelters monkeys, which the people gladly devour. There is a yellow specimen called kra-ve,* which seeing the gun before the latter is fired, causes the barrel to burst—a reason explaining the frequent accidents. Hunters speak of the Gha (غا), or Inaki of the Egbas, a huge anthropoid ape, formerly found about Gbezumen, a village one day's journey from Whydah, and they make its cry to resemble that of the gorilla. There are also fabulous animals. The Aziza, for instance, is a sylvan beast, erect, manlike, and loud-voiced; it teaches the hunter fetish, and makes him wondrous brave.† Many birds have legends attached to them. Kites (the *Falco Chilla* of India) are eaten, and magic medicines are made from the Afunsoko'u, or white-breasted raven (*Corvus Senegalensis*), also called Aze-khe, or man-eater. It is here supposed to be a

---

* A name formerly applied by the Portuguese to dog's flesh, which is still relished here.

---

* Of this animal wonderful tales are rife throughout Yoruba.

† The Aja of the Egbas is a dwarf, who carries off men to the bush, and teaches them magic and medicine.

"devil" (bad ghost), and to talk; as with the Egbas, no rain falls when it lays its eggs, and its flocking denotes impending war. The owl, too, is an Aze-khe, or cannibal, a messenger of anthropophagi, who would kill and devour a foe; men and boys will often be seen carrying these small grey birds by the legs. The turkey-buzzard is respected for its utility. No one will kill the "King's bird," a small *motacilla,* termed Awáje'khe, which consequently becomes tame as a wren; the Nago women are supposed to talk to and to understand it. The cuculine "Scotchman" is a "devil-bird," causing the gun to burst. Mr. Cruikshank shot several specimens, but—*n'importe;* it is called "*Wu-tu-tu,*" an onomatopoetic word, exactly expressing its note.* There is a *muscicapa* called Berille, which disregards the burning bush, when attacking the expelled locusts, therefore the soldier is ordered to be "brave as the Berille." Ring-doves, large and small, abound through the country, and were noticed by Phillips. There is a fine spur-fowl known as Koklo-asso, or bush poultry, heavier birds and darker than the English partridge, short winged and good runners. They are best killed with No. 3 shot. In the first year they are good eating, and they are found in coveys throughout the *enceinte*, where not built over. A single quail was seen, and the few herons and water birds were very wild. We could not collect many specimens, being compelled to confine our rambles to the vicinity of the town.

---

* This is much as if we were to call a crow a "caw," and a sheep a "baa"—expressive, but childish.

The tenure of land throughout the empire is in "fee-simple," allodium, as amongst us, being unknown. Agriculture is despised, because slaves are employed in it. The people, however, are not ignorant of husbandry. The women ridge the ground neatly with their little hoes, and some, more industrious, dispose over their crofts the huge heaps of kitchen-midden that have grown about their houses. Were its cultivation enforced, the oil-palm, as has been said, would be a mine of wealth, and the roads to the coast, except in a few places, are good enough for wheeled vehicles. But there is scant inducement to amass riches, of which the owner would assuredly be "squeezed" as often as he could support the operation.

Dahome, like Yoruba, perhaps I may say like eastern and western intertropical Africa generally, is a red soil,* and prodigiously fertile. This is "dead dries," when the algid breath of the desert wind blows strongly, making all adust. Yet even the poles planted in our yard put forth green leaves.

---

* Hence, in Senegal, the old French name, "Le terrier rouge," Anglicised by "Red Borough."

Agbome is higher, drier, and less unhealthy than Whydah. After eight years' weathering, the swish walls show little damage here. The Harmattan * season lasts from December to January, and is followed by the hot months of March and April, when tornadoes usher in tolerably heavy rains. The wet weather begins in May, or sometimes, as in 1863, late in June. About September there is a break, called the harvest-time or the Little Dries. October and November are the later rains, generally accompanied by severe tornadoes, and by tremendous storms of thunder and lightning. The climate, in fact, is that of inner Yoruba.†

---

* The Harmattan wind, here called Wuo, is a supernatural being, not unlike the Giant of Egba. This black Æolus is shut in a cave, under a guardian called Wuo-hun-to, who, after oiling his own body, which would otherwise be cut up by the wind, opens the gate and lets his charge issue to torment the world. It is curious to find a Cave of the Winds in Yoruba.

† Mr. Cooley, the self-styled "Opener of Inner Africa," has lately (Athenæum, July 18, 1863) informed the world, that "the rainy season is also the hot season, near the equator." Is this dotage? Barbot (book 3, chap. xii.) informs us that the Guinea year has two seasons, the summer and winter (of the Portuguese and English), called good and bad by the Dutch; high and low by the French. "Summer (*i.e.*, hot dry weather) begins in September, and lasts the five following months, and the

The modern Dahomans, I have said, are a mongrel breed, and a bad. They are Cretan liars, *cretins* at learning, cowardly and therefore cruel and bloodthirsty; gamblers, and consequently cheaters; brutal, noisy, boisterous, unvenerative, and disobedient, dipsas-bitten things, who deem it a "duty to the gods to be drunk;" a "flatulent, self-conceited herd of barbarians," who endeavour to humiliate all those with whom they deal; in fact, a slave race—vermin with a soul apiece.

Furca, furax, infamis, iners, furiosa ruina,

describes the race. They pride themselves on not being, like the Popos, addicted to the "dark and dirty crime of poison;" the fact is, they have been enabled hitherto to carry everything with a high and violent hand. They are dark in skin, the browns being of xanthous temperament, middle-sized, slight, and very lightly made—my Krumen looked like Englishmen amongst them*—agile, good walkers, and hard dancers, that

---

winter (*i.e.*, cold wet season) holds the other six months of the year, which are also divided into two rainy, two misty and rainy (or smoky), and two windy and rainy months (our tornadoes)." So of the Great Bandy (or Bonny River, with which he was personally aquainted), he says (book 4, chap. viii.), "We reckon the months of October, November, and December, the worst season, because of the dry scorching heat of the sun."

* In all wrestling bouts, my Krumen threw the hammock-bearers

carry little weight. Their dress is a godo, or T-bandage, a nun-pwe (undercloth), or a Ffon chokoto (pair of short drawers), and an owu-chyon, or body-cloth, twelve feet long by four to six broad, worn like the Roman toga, from which it may possibly be derived.

The women are of the Hastini or elephant-order, described by the Reverend Koka Pandit, dark, plain, masculine, and, comparatively speaking, of large, strong, and square build. They are the reapers as well as the sowers of the field, and can claim the merits of laboriousness, if of no other quality. They tattoo their skins, especially the stomach, with alto-relievo patterns; their dress is a zone of beads, supporting a bandage beneath the do'vo, or scanty loin-cloth, which suffices for the poor and for young girls ; the upper classes add an aga-vo, or over-cloth, two fathoms long, passed under the arms, and covering all from the bosom to the ancles. The peculiarities of their *coiffure* and ornaments have been explained.

Neither sex ever "wears shirt, shoe, or stocking in their lives." Yet, as the old traveller remarks, at least this advantage results from their simplicity of dress,

---

on their heads, and on one occasion, during a kind of party fight, six of them, with fist and stick, held their own against twenty Dahomans.

that "of both sides they may see their tackle before they go to work, and not, as we are forced to do, take wives at all adventures without knowing their bodily defects and deformities, which are covered and concealed by their clothes." And even those who deny that climate makes the man will not refuse its claim to making the tailor. European attire in Africa is as void of the fitness of things as an African toilette would be in Europe. Here leather perishes, broadcloth loses nap and stiffens, linen and cotton mildew or change colour, gloves feed cockroaches, and flannels shrink to half size.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FIRING TO WHYDAH, AND CONCLUSION OF THE CUSTOMS.*

At 9 A.M., of Monday, January 25th, we were suddenly summoned to the Jegbe, or southernmost palace, lying about twenty minutes of hammock, on a broad open road, beyond the Komasi House. The first things we remarked were little grass huts, built at intervals of 200 to 300 yards, and the measuring-rope still lay upon the ground; the first was on the right hand of the Komasi Gate. They had pent roofs, with a terminal tuft at each gable, small verandahs, supported by light poles, and the side walls were patterned with lines and lozenges of light-coloured bamboo and "Soyyan," the thunder fetish shrub. Those nearest the palace were the most decorated. Before each hut, for the two soldiers lodged in it, were planted on four short forked sticks a pair of muskets, lest one should miss fire. During the present custom no discharge of guns is allowed in the town. These Gu-ho, or "tabernacles," are the lodgings of the Dahoman army when on the line of march; as they extend to Whydah, they must number some 880, and represent a waste of work that would repair all the walls of all the palaces. The bright idea of the "firing play" originated from the Chacha de Souza, who, by stationing men on the road, sent up in an hour or two a cigar from Whydah to King Gezo at Agbome*—a rude and barbarous telegraph. Gezo worked it out to its present state; he, however, used to begin his ceremonies at 7 A.M.

---

* This festival in its entirety is known to the natives as Azan'gbe—birthday to-day. The King keeps his birthday once a year, not once per week as his brother of Komasi, and the day is mostly a matter of guess.

Passing Bwe-kon Hwe 'gbo on the right, we debouched upon an open country, with light green fields, to which grazing horses gave a home look. The outskirts of the southern suburb are scattered over with outlying villages of matting, where the principal officers are expected at times to lodge, and here the oil palm-tree begins to show in force. The sun was hot, and the Harmattan blurred the blue horizon line, the floating imperceptible dust doing away with all idea of nearness beyond a hundred yards. The climate is much that of an Egyptian spring, remarkable for flies, dust, and khamsin, the desert wind, here represented by the Harmattan. "Truly rural" was the scene, and the open and healthy site would be far superior for an "English House" to the noise, dulness, and prison-sensation of the town; the main disadvantage, however, is its distance from water. On the left of the road was the Nesu-hwe, or fetish, in which the King sits when on his way to change palaces; white flags were planted in a space railed off with the usual thin bamboo and tie-tie; a heap of speckled pottery lay outside, whilst inside squatted reverend men and women.

---

* The forwarding of presents, however, from town to town is common in Yoruba, and the Egbas call it Asingba. It is the "Banghey dawk" of Africa.

After half-an-hour's march, our chairs were placed beneath a tree opposite, and some 100 yards distant from, a long wall of faded matting. This is Jegbe House, the private abode of the present King when he was heir-apparent; and here he lived during the last few years of his father's life, cultivating the reactionary party. As Gelele has not yet been confirmed at

Allada, the *enceinte* walls must not be built of mud, and whilst the King lives under matting, so must his nobles.

At 11.30 A.M. we were summoned into the palace interior. The Agwáji Gate led into an oblong court of matting, sprinkled with thick-leaved little fig-trees of vivid green, and divided into two by the usual line of bamboos. At the bottom of the southern half was the royal pavilion, somewhat like a Shahmiyana in Bengal, with an open wing on each side. The sloping roof of the central part, intended for the King, was of gold and lake damask, under two broad strips of red and green satin; the wings, all silk and velvet, were horizontally banded with red, white edged green, purple and yellow, red and green, in succession, from the top; and where the tongue-shaped lappets started, with chrome yellow. The hangings, playing loosely in the wind, were remarkable chiefly for grotesque figures of men and beasts cut out of coloured cloth and sewn to the lining. At the main entrances seven umbrellas, three figured and four plain white, formed a baldachin for the women, and sheltered an equal number of rude and rickety little tables. Here also were disposed many calabashes; eight pairs of muskets, each with its

Amazon, stood on forks; and in the shade lay a few ancient officers, old babery, in bright silk cloaks and tippets, holding acinaciform bill-hooks. On the men's side, fronting the King, were five tattered white umbrellas, covering eleven poor tables, and behind them a score of ministers and captains, attired, like the women, in capes and *mantos* of red, pink, and flowered silks and satins. Chalk-goggled Kpo-fen-su, head man and head fool, and an assistant Wamba, hideous in a red velvet tobe of Hausa cut, sat on the proper right of the throne, under a bit of matting near the model of a canoe raised on little poles, with three pennons, red, white, and blue. Dancing and singing went on in different parts of the compound, and presently a small party of Ko-si, or *filles de joie*, "for man side" and "for woman side," all dark and very plain, sang before the royal tent, and walked about amongst the males.

Our chairs were placed before a group of miserables, who had been sitting in the palace since dawn—Mr. Dawson, Pierre, the mulatto "landlord," of French-town, Whydah, where he was born, and his attendant. an old Brazilian,[*] together with a M. Cirqueira, before alluded to. They were apparently attending upon a pair of half-castes, Antonio de Souza, brother of the Chacha, and Francisco Zangrony, son of a Spanish merchant at Whydah.* The latter two had arrived last night at 10 p.m., and at six this morning they had been summoned to the palace.

---

[*] Known as To (father, *scil.*, his father), do (speaks), nun (thing),

After we had waited about two hours, an increased noise and hubbub, an uprising of male and female dignities, and a raising of the pavilion flaps, announced the King. He was dressed in a yellow silk toga, with small red flowers; a broad belt of probably false pearls and gold hung from his left shoulder to his right side, and a large crucifix suspended to his neck, were the principal ornaments: in his left hand he held a common hour-glass. After he had deposited himself on the couch acting throne, we saluted him, and he returned the compliment with a large black felt sombrero plentifully braided with gold. He then drank with us all, using a silver mug, which, amongst

---

'gbo (true, opposed to Vú, a lie; *e.g.*, Nun boe!—it is true; Nun vue! —it is false).

* Years ago Zangrony *père* disputed about canoe-men with the Rev. T. B. Freeman, formerly Wesleyan missionary to these parts, and died a few days afterwards. Of course his mishap was attributed to the "god-man's" wrath.

silver armlets, a rosary, and sundry pieces of plate, stood before him upon an old-fashioned table with four metal legs and a red velvet cover. Whilst drinking, a piece of white calico was held up before the royal face.

The ceremonies of the day began with the prostrations and the copious sand-drenchings of three captains, who had quarrelled. They kissed earth as if they loved it, as the popular exile is supposed to do when restored to "native shore." After long compliments to the King, a woman rose and cried, "A-de-o,"[*] and at 1.40 P.M. the two muskets planted before the King were discharged. The firing was taken up by the rest; it ran round Jegbe, went to and returned from Komasi House in three minutes. Thus Gelele obtained Gezo's permission to "open the Custom," and in honour of the occasion he twice drank our healths.

At 2 P.M. another cry of "A-de-o" started the guns to Whydah, which they ought to reach in half-an-hour. The Addu-konun and the Sosu-to[†] walked down a line of cowries placed about six feet outside the dividing bamboo in distinct pairs, enabling the caboceers to ascertain by counting when the firing would arrive at its destination. On the women's side a weaveress, squatting before the usual artless upright loom of Dahome, made a cloth, and calculated the number of threads—the rudest substitute for a timepiece. Meanwhile the soldier chiefs, Adan-men-nunkon and Dakua, knelt, looking as usual from the eye-corner to get the cue for time, made obeisance, and, whilst five heralds proclaimed the royal titles with normal blateration, and a jester sprang his kra-kra, or watchman's rattle, they began a speech, which is bound to last till the discharge returns from Whydah. For a time the tongues bore up bravely; presently the dust and the heat of the sun told upon them; and lastly, the poor devils could hardly from time to time ejaculate a sentence. The firing was an utter failure; an hour-and-a-half instead of half-an-hour had elapsed before a blue bag, passed from hand to hand by the women, was placed, fronting the King, as a trophy from Whydah. There will be stick for this.

---

[*] For Adios, good-bye, a word everywhere used on the Coast till superseded by English.

[†] Addu (tooth, teeth), and konun (laugh). The other name is Sosu (proper name), and to (father),—that is to say, Sosu's father.

Gelele, having again drunk with us, then summoned by name his Gau—who responded "W'e!"—and began a stale and dreary allocution touching Abeokuta and his father's grave, preparation for war, and his resolve that the Min-gan should treat as a captive any soldier disgracing herself by hanging back. Eight old women, the ghosts of the kings, presently marched up, solemn and slow, paying their respects to live royalty.

Ensued a terrible hubbub, drumming, talking, and singing, which told my now practised ears that victual was about to appear. Presently women moved out the bamboo, and spread mats before the King; whilst long lines of slave-girls deposited upon them dishes of cates, plates of food, bottles of liquor, baskets and calabashes marked with the royal brand. There was a great number of barbecued piglets, which were easily lifted with the thumb and two fingers. Amidst a prodigious noise, the provision was parcelled out. We received a share that gladdened the hearts of our hammock-men; they little recked that the roasted-whole of to-day would right soon diminish to a porker's nose for thirty, their number.

This ceremony was initiated by Gezo, although the custom of "Spreading a Table"* is common along the

---

* That the manes of the dead may eat and be filled. Here it is called by the natives Agban (profit), du (eating), do men (on the ground). Agban also signifies luggage, a ship's cargo, meats of all kinds, and so

West African coast. At the end of the funeral customs, especially in the Old Calabar River, a small house is built upon the beach, and in it are placed the valuables possessed by the departed—some whole, and others broken,—statues, clocks, vases, porcelains, and so forth, together with a bed, that the ghost may not sleep upon the floor, and a quantity of food upon a table. Here, on the fourth day after the burial, come all who have assisted in the ceremony; they wash their faces, and enjoin the departed ghost, by the care with which he has been provided with what he loved in life, not to let or injure them.* Similarly in Europe, during the last century, when princes lay in state, a well-garnished table was provided for the dead in the chapel.

On Tuesday, January 26th, we were again called to the palace, where we found little novelty. The King, wishing to "talk Abeokuta," summoned his three senior military officers, and finding all absent, sent for them. I expected a scene; the "Monster of Dahome," how-

---

forth; whilst Agban-du, or profit-eating, is our spendthrifting, meaning that these funeral expenses are ruinous to all but the King.

[*] See under the word Nqueme, in the valuable dictionary of the Efik language, published by the Rev. Hugh Goldie. Dunn and Wright, Glasgow, 1862.

ever, contented himself, after haranguing the defaulters, with ordering the people to greet each with cries of "Agbwere!"[*]

Then took place the ceremony of declaring war. The King sent out a small knapsack-shaped leather case, containing rum, to the Min-gan, who, after passing the strap over his head, pirouetted three or four times before "the presence," and forwarded the article by a messenger to the Gau. This dignitary received it with an immense show of enthusiasm; and after a fighting speech, rushed affectedly to the gate, crying to the outsiders that war-rum had been given. The King, summoned by his subjects, came forth in a mauve cloth, and, to their uproarious delight, addressed them in Fanti, "Egyá Mák-'yo"—Father, good morning!—meaning, that when such words were spoken, he must attack the Egbas. Then taking a crooked stick, he performed two decapitation dances and retired, after handing the weapon to his followers, who fervently imitated him. It was nearly 9 P.M. before we reached our quarters.

At 8 A.M., Thursday, January 28th, the two wives for the Chacha of Whydah and José dos Santos were despatched to the coast. This is the principal ceremony of "Firing from Whydah," and the women must not quit their hammocks, which are carried by the live telegraph, till, half dead with fatigue, they reach Whydah. Nothing was to be seen but two plain-faced slave girls, in broad-brimmed straws and country cloths, sitting their hammocks in the old fashioned style of Bowdich and Dupuis, crossways, and holding to the pole instead of lying at full length.

---

[*] You are a fool! or, You have spoiled it!

The ceremonies concluded hastily; the King was hurried by a curious appearance in the sun, visible only through the opaque Harmattan air when about 30 deg. above the horizon. At 4 P.M., January 27th—we first remarked it on that day—a spot, like a black pin's head upon the yellow surface, occupied nearly the centre of the globe; it gradually shifted upwards and to the right in the morning, the reverse, of course, appearing in the evening. It was not seen after February 3rd, but the dense morning fogs, and the thick evening mists and smokes, may have hid it from us. The Kew Observatory noticed it.

On Saturday, January 30th, a report reached Agbome, that a Mr. Craft,* the mulatto agent for the new "Company of African Merchants" (limited), had arrived at Whydah, and forthwith appeared a batch of samples and stuffs which the King had ordered. The Buko-no on the same evening proposed that Mr. Bernasko should at once leave us and superintend the landing of the valuables, whilst we, being "great men"—"soft sawder," as usual, to *dorer la pillule,*—must wait for a more ceremonious dismissal. These people, who expect much from traders but little from servants of Government, make no secret of preferring those who pay to those who do not.* My reply was, that Mr. Bernasko's departure would be the signal for mine, even if we must walk to Whydah. Wishing to change the system of dismissal, I had fortunately reserved for the hour of need all the small presents which had been brought for the high officials, and which are usually given immediately after arrival.

---

* The "Iwe Irohin," or Abeokuta paper of July, 1863, introduced him

Seeing little chance of immediate departure, I redoubled my efforts to penetrate for a few marches northwards, where the lovely hills of Makhi were a perpetual eyesore to me. The late king relaxed the usual

---

as having been "sent to Dahomy with a view to inducing the King to abandon human sacrifices, and to encourage legitimate trade."

* So Commander Forbes complained of being kept waiting outside the palace when the slave-dealers were in consultation with King Gezo.

Dahoman severity in matters of ingress, giving escorts to Dr. Dickson, the fellow traveller of Clapperton, and to Mr. Duncan, afterwards H. B. M. Vice-Consul. His son, on the contrary, has shut up all the roads, lest strangers should learn something about the interior, and perhaps assist his enemies; by thus standing fast and firm against any semblance of innovation, he hopes, perhaps, to hold his own, even in opposition to white men, whose superiority he never questions. He promised that, on my return, I should penetrate into the mountain-land; pleaded want of time and troops, and consoled me by the suggestion that I was too important a personage to be risked in the bush. This was not wholly "blarney;" any accident to the "King's stranger" would be looked upon as a dire and portentous occurrence.*

We had now spent nearly six weeks in Agbome without being allowed to deliver the message of Her Majesty's Government in person to the King. The latter was therefore informed, that until some respect was paid to my instructions, I should not again appear at the palace. An opportunity of proving that my words were spoken in earnest soon presented itself. When sent for on February 6th, to witness the distribution of cloth amongst the soldiers who had been firing to Whydah, I objected to leave the house. Mr. Cruikshank, however, attended, and saw the presentation of 470 cloths, each fourteen yards long, and here worth about two dollars each. Thereupon the Buko-no informed the Reverend, that after five days, which here means the fourth (Saturday the 9th) we should be summoned to deliver the Message, and be instantly "passed."* We could not, however, rely upon the truth of a word that fell from the holy man's lips.

---

* See Mr. Duncan, vol. ii. p. 263. The King gave him an escort of 100 men, and told the Ashanti envoy, who wished to make mischief, that he might take back the royal present, a gold-hilted sword, and inform his father that all the gold in the country would not induce himself to intercept an Englishman.

On February 8th an official letter from Commodore Wilmot informed me that a cruizer was waiting for my conveyance to the Oil Rivers of the Bight of Biafra. This rendered strong measures necessary. The thirty porters for whom I had applied had been forgotten, and further delay appeared probable. On the morning of February 9th, our boxes and bags were produced, and were ostentatiously packed in the compound, whilst Messrs. Bernasko and Dawson repaired to the palace with a message, that unless faith was kept with me, I must set out on the next day. They witnessed one of the royal *boutades*. The high ministers, when summoned by the King, did not appear within a satisfactory time: Gelele reproached them violently for not living, according to his *arrêt*, close to the Jegbe, and ordered his Amazons to take up the bamboos, and to drive them with blows and curses from his presence. They went out like beaten hounds, and cowered at the gate, whilst the King sent a message to me apologising for not attending to our affairs, as rage would prevent his sleeping.

---

* This is an old custom of the empire; no visitor can leave the King without his especial permission. In 1772, Mr. Norris was "passed" with a present consisting of a fat sheep, an anker of brandy, and five cabess of cowries.

On February 11th, Mr. Dawson was "passed." He swore sacrament that he would never again show face at Agbome; but being a prudent man, he contented himself with the Fanti proverb, "Cross the river before you speak ill of the crocodile." The ceremony of breaking glasses to conclude the Customs now took place. I was surprised to hear that it is considered the real European mode of ending a feast; it must date from old times, when three-bottle men drank only in the evening, not throughout the day as do modern sobrieties. The missionaries, when sent for to the Jegbe Palace, found, in the central space between the men and the women, a table, with two flasks of rum and liqueur, flanked by plates and glasses. The King, having drank with his visitors to the health of his father's ghost, directed a Portuguese mulatto, a resident at Agbome, to pray in Lusitanian tongue for the departed. This done, Gelele spilt a few drops of rum upon the ground, again imbibed, and dashed his glass upon the table. It was a signal for all those present to do the same, and the attendants smashed everything, including the tables.

This terminated the Khwe-ta-nun, or yearly Customs for 1863-64.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DELIVERY OF THE MESSAGE.

On Friday, February 12th, we received two visits from the fat Adanejan. He led me with great mystery into an inner room, and, tracing lines upon the floor, asked many questions about Abeokuta, carefully cross-examining me, till convinced that he was not deceived. The King's personal courtesy to me demanding some return, I drew the outline of the Egba defences upon a sheet of paper and sent it back, advising him by no means, till his forces were trebled, and even then not without howitzers or field pieces, to cross the Ogun, a river so fatal to his father. "Ah! but," said the stout man, "the enemy will run when they see us." I told him that they would not, at least, as long as they were sheltered by walls, and suggested fascines, and simple methods of getting at the enemy, which were received with incredulous smiles, as things worthy of the crafty white, but incompatible with the dignity of Dahoman heroism.* Presently the Adanejan departed, carrying with him, in token of his having seen me, a favourite bowie-knife, which it was impossible to recover.

At 3 P.M. on the next day, February 13th, when, almost in despair, we had resolved to walk to the coast, using our hammock-men as porters, the Buko-no's messenger hurried us in full dress to the palace. The old man thus deceived me again, and for the last time. He had heard of his rival's success in carrying off a favourite weapon, and he was resolved to "pay me out." Harpagon lay quietly in the cool verandah, with a stool supporting his head, whilst we had the pleasure of sitting in a kind of Simum, with glare enough to dazzle an eagle, opposite the ragged palm-leaf fence of the Jegbe House. It was anything but a dignified position, this four hours' *séance* before the barbarous abode of a petty African chief, whose pride has been swollen by mulatto slave-dealers into a manner of mania. I resolved to speak plainly to the King upon the subject of this unworthy treatment.

---

* The reader will presently see how important was the advice.

At 6 P.M., when the few ministers who were to be present at the conference had entered the palace, we received a summons. Passing through two mat-fenced courts, we found the King sitting under an ordinary shed, verandahed by umbrellas. As usual, there was a ring of white sand before him; the nearest posts had been covered with calico, and half-a-dozen "ladies" squatted behind their lord. Besides ourselves, the only men present were the Adanejan, the Meu, and the Buko-no, who acted ward. He had ignominiously rated and turned out John Mark, the "governor," who attempted to accompany Beecham, the recognised interpreter. The prostrations before the King were perfunctory, and there was little of the ceremoniousness displayed at the public levées.

After we had made *congés,* Gelele rose and shook hands with us. Returning to his seat, a bamboo cot, covered with fine cloths and mats, he perceived that there was something wrong, and told me that he had heard of my complaining about him, after we had been the best of friends, dancing and drinking together. I replied that there was no grievance against the King, but that it had not been well to retard the delivery of so important a message for two months. This was met by the plea of occupation, and by reminding me that the substance of the despatches had already been communicated. My next objection was, that his minister had attempted to make us keep the house, like state prisoners, for two moons: that we had been subject to other petty annoyances at the hands of the Buko-no; that we had not been permitted freely to see and mix with the chiefs; and that we had been prevented from visiting the Makhi Mountains for sport and recreation, as was allowed to Messrs. Dickson and Duncan. To this he gave the usual reply, that they were small men; and as this did not satisfy me, he asked me point blank, after a whisper from the Meu, if there was anything upon that subject in my instructions. I replied in the negative, and was thereupon assured that, had my orders been such, I should have been allowed to travel northward,—which, to use the mildest terms, was not the case. I finally asked him if he was aware that we had that very afternoon been kept for hours in the sun before his gate, a custom unknown to all civilised peoples. As we expected, he had never heard of it, and showed a surprise, which appeared natural, at this and others of our tribulations. To change a disagreeable subject, he bantered me about keeping the Buko-no's unruly slaves in order with the staff, to which I pleaded a *molliter imposuit*. At length, seeing my brow cleared by the perfect good humour with which he discussed these personal preliminaries, he directed me to read the "Message."

I then began, and, after each sentence, the interpreter translated it. He did so correctly, in fear of conviction. The reasons which prevented Captain Wilmot's return to Agbome were first duly stated; then came the ticklish subjects of slave export and human sacrifice, forbidden themes at the Court of Dahome. Touching the former, the King was informed that Her Majesty's Government is resolved to arrest the traffic, and that the United States of America would no longer allow their vessels to carry live cargo. With respect to human sacrifice, that the more its horrors were mitigated, the better. In enlarging upon these two last paragraphs, I felt a sense of hopelessness with which the reader of these pages will, perhaps, sympathise; it was like talking to the winds. As regards the King's offer to repair the English Fort, Whydah, and to permit it to be garrisoned by English troops,* I thanked him for such mark of confidence, assuring him that the royal protection was all-sufficient, but that before English merchants would settle at Whydah, there must be the inducement of useful commerce. I assured him that in such case an agent would be appointed to reside at Whydah, both as an organ of communication with the King, and as an aid in carrying out all views of licit trade.* The gift of a carriage and horses—here came the rub—would entirely depend upon future relations between Her Majesty's Government and the King, who must see the propriety of making some concessions touching his Customs and slave hunts. Finally, that if any of the coloured Christian prisoners taken at Ishagga were alive, it would be considered an earnest of the King's friendly feeling, and of his desire to perform his promises, if these people were given up to us.

---

* Ashanti was just now shown the unadvisability of stationing Euro-

The message was heard, with few interruptions, from beginning to end. When the reply was given, I perceived that the King and his visitors could not, like

---

peans on the west coast of Africa. Both Gelele and his father have expressed an earnest desire to give up Whydah to the English—but neither meant it. The latter is said to have refused the cession to the Prince de Joinville.

* I need hardly add, that the commerce never will become licit, except by force; and that until that time an agent is simply impossible.

many Africans, "pick up the words," that is to say, answer sentence by sentence. Gelele replied in a rambling style, which requires ordering: That the slave-trade was an ancestral custom, established by white men, to whom he would sell all they wanted: to the English, who, after greatly encouraging the export, had lately turned against it, palm oil and "tree wool;" to the Portuguese, slaves. That a single article would not defray such expenses as those which I had witnessed. Moreover, that the customs of his kingdom compelled him to make war, and that unless he sold he must slay his captives, which England, perhaps, would like even less.*

The English, he resumed, had ever been the best friends of his family. One of his ancestors had sent a son amongst them, and thus all had learned to love them.† In the days of Tegbwesun (Bossa Ahadi,

---

* So the great Central African king, Muata ya Nvo, or Matiamvo, said, in 1847, to the Portuguese traveller, Graça: "It is customary for us to sell as slaves those who commit murder or robbery, and those who are guilty of adultery, insubordination, and sorcery; and having a great number of slaves, what can I do with them but put them to death if I cannot find purchasers for them?"

† This is explained by Dr. M'Leod (pp. 102-106). About 1800 one of the kings forwarded two of his brothers for education to England, on board a ship then trading to Whydah. The captain died, and they were sold as slaves at Demarara. After sundry difficulties, they were redeemed

1727—1774), one Aján-gán—Mr. Goodson—had taught Dahome to use field pieces, and thus they had been able to debel the strong Makhi country called "Za."[*] The road of amity had been closed to Gezo, and re-opened to himself by his friend the Rev. Mr. Bernasko. The "King of England" and he were now like one finger. But he directed me to write and to declare that, whereas men-of-war formerly never touched slavers, they now captured them near his beach, which could not be permitted. Some of these prizes had or might have on board orders from him, and this rendered interference with them a personal offence.[†]

Here, again, was the work of the caboceers, and their master had learned his lesson but too well. A

---

by the influence of Mr. Robertson, of Liverpool, and were sent back under charge of a Captain Davidson. They were dressed like English boys, and had scarcely touched their natal soil, than they resumed all their old customs, falling on their knees to the caboceer who received them, and next day they disrobed themselves of jacket and trowsers, not having been "whitewashed," *i. e.* made white men by their royal brother. Two days afterwards they were conducted to Agbome. They did not complain of being sold at Demarara, and probably they expected nothing else.

[*] It is now an unimportant place, distant a day's march N.E. of Agbome. The ruffian conqueror is said to have cut off the noses of all his captives.

[†] King Gezo made the same request to Mr. Duncan (vol. ii. p. 263).

counter-demand is the favourite African form of refusing a request. I desired the King to hear me before such an outrageous claim was put on paper, and he consented. He was informed that Great Britain had paid large sums to many nations for the right of searching their ships; that if he sent his own vessels to sea, he could assert the same title to indemnity, but he could not interfere for those of any European nations; moreover, that, even in war, a three miles' offing annuls, according to the custom of civilised peoples, the protection of a neutral shore. No one had prepared a reply to this explanation; they contented themselves, by way of rejoinder, with directing me to write down what the King had spoken. I could only express my regret at being compelled to forward a message so unworthy and so disappointing to the government and people of England.

Upon the second subject, human sacrifice, Gelele declared that he slew only malefactors and war-captives, who, if they could, would do the same to him; that his own subjects were never victims; that in the accounts reported by "mutual" enemies there had been, as he had told Captain Wilmot, a gross numerical exaggeration; in fact, he repeated the statements of a hundred years' standing, as the History shows, and his assertions were partially true.

When asked for my reply, I submitted, in Jeremy Bentham's words, that the worst use to which he could put a man was to kill him ; that Dahome wanted not deaths, but births, and that subjects followed the religion of their prince. It was, therefore, incumbent upon him to reduce the number of his sacrifices, and to spare his visitors the disgusting spectacle of nude and mutilated corpses, hanging for two or three days in the sun ; moreover that, until such barbarity should be changed, I should advise all Englishmen, who dislike "tickling of the liver,"* to avoid his Court at Customs' time. The King had never heard so much truth before in his life : he did not accept my plain speaking without "stirring of the mind ;"† nor could I expect it. The Rev. Mr. Bernasko thanked me aloud, and all around understood the expression.

The King passed next to the subject of an English resident at Whydah, and adroitly shifted the case into granting the permission and privilege, instead of receiving it as a favour. He also stipulated that the white must be a good man, who would write profitable things about the country, cause no palavers, and prevent the captains of cruisers capturing slaves off his coast. When I asked, somewhat ironically, if such agent would be liable to be summoned at pleasure to attend the capital, compelled to be present at the Customs, condemned to live in the Buko-no's house, and be subject to be seated for hours in the sun, enjoying the prospect of the palace wall?—he carelessly replied "No," in a tone which to me meant emphatically YES.

---

* A native phrase, meaning nausea.

† A native phrase, meaning anger.

With respect to the Ishagga captives,* the King had, early after my arrival, sent me word by the Buko-no that he had put all of them to death, *not knowing them to be Christians*, a marked and emphatic non-fact, which he had also protested to Captain Wilmot. Moreover, for certain physiognomical reasons, I am induced to think that several of the wretches are still alive, and are being reserved for future sacrifice. There was, however, no proof positive, nor would any one, especially of the missionary body, aid me in carrying out an investigation.†

---

* See Chap. XIV., Section E.

† When at Agbome, a boy put into my hands some strange papers touching the Ishagga victims: at present it would be indiscreet to reveal the secret.

Ensued a desultory conversation. The King, apparently forgetting the carriage and horses, recalled to mind the Tokpon tent, and adhered to the subject *mordicus*, frequently asking me if Mr. Cruikshank had taken the measurements, to which an affirmative reply was given. Thinking this the most proper opportunity, I requested him that the boys of the English town, Whydah, might attend the Wesleyan Missionary School, reminding him of a half promise which he had made during the Commodore's visit. Now, however, being puffed up, he spoke another language; he declared that when black men learn to read and write, and to "know sense,"* like Beecham, they could not be taken to war. Upon my objecting to this view, he directed me to "let it pass;" in other words, to change the subject. I then complained that the people of Godome, who, last spring, had broken open my boxes, containing presents for the King, had escaped punishment, whereby, emboldened, Posu-kpa, caboceer of that time, aided and abetted by sundry of the pestilent De Souzas, had lately seized, beaten, imprisoned in a nude state, after robbing his watch and seventeen dollars, Mr. Henry Bannerman, of Cape Coast Castle, an unoffending English subject. The King replied, very naïvely, that he had never heard of the outrage. The reply was, that had we not been present, he certainly never would have known, but that his officers did know—which was the case.* He added, that inquiry should be made, meaning that nothing would be done. Although no official directions had reached me, and the coloured man Craft had behaved with notable indecency by leaving his arrival entirely unannounced, I represented to the King that this person was a bonâ fide *employé*, of the Company of African merchants (limited), and that as he was treated so would his employers withdraw from or enlarge their business in Dahome. Gelele was profuse in professions, swearing that every one dealing with "Krafu" (Mr. Craft) should pay beforehand. Nothing could be further from his intentions.

---

* An old Anglo-African term for civilisation, religion, wearing small clothes &c.

I was disenchanted by this message scene. The personal courtesies of the King compared badly with his stubborn resolve to ignore, even in the smallest matters, the wishes of Her Majesty's Government. Nothing appeared uppermost in his mind but an ignoble greed of presents. Of course, his hands were tied in the case of abolishing slave export and human sacrifice, but he might have offered his minimum. The unexpected civilities of the last official visitors to his Court have filled him with an exaggerated idea of his own importance; whilst the astuteness and suspiciousness of his caboceers cause them to see, in the short interval between the two messages, a further aim, and one affecting their interests. I did not at all join with the Commodore in thinking Gelele's observations "thoroughly just and honest;"* they are mere parrot-like repetitions of a lesson learned from the pro-slavery party nearly a century ago. It presently became apparent that, even in the smallest matters, he had as scant a regard for truth as his subjects have. After a long and uninteresting dialogue, in which I told him that my departure ought to take place that night, he swore, on the word of a King, that I should leave Agbome next morning, and directed me to "drop that," when a little doubt was expressed touching the "morning." I need hardly say that at the time appointed nothing was ready. My last question to the King was respecting the name which he wishes to bear in England. He proposed, through the ministers, who whispered with great awe, "Kini-kini-kini." I objected to it, as far too long for the time-saving Briton, and proposed "Gelele;" which was approved of.*

---

* We had scarcely returned home before the Buko-no confessed it.

---

* See Appendix III.

Eight P.M. had already sped, when the King declared the *séance* over. He told me, that if my mind was no longer stirred, we might drink together. I again denied personal bad feeling towards him, regretting that the same could not be said about certain of his *entourage*,† and that he had not charged me with a more agreeable message for home. We stood up, and drank gin and liqueur. No noise was made on this occasion, the ministers contenting themselves with kissing the ground. The King then arose, to conduct us outside the palace. The inner doorway being too narrow for two abreast, I fell back a little, and he asked the reason, through the interpreter. My answer was, with us crowned heads always walk first; whereupon he shook hands cordially, told me that I was "a good man, but," rolling his head, "too angry." At the distance of 200 yards, he stood, shook hands, snapped fingers, and bade us adieu, exhorting a speedy return.

---

* For other names, Tenge, &c., see Appendix IV. How secret the King's name is kept may be seen from the "Travels" of Dr. M'Leod and Captain Adams, who, though repeating a variety of tales about the monarch, nowhere reveal his appellation.

† This kind of plain speaking is always well received by African and often by Asiatic princes. They deem it honourable to defend their ministers before an accuser; but in private, the former will undergo, as a rule, a searching inquiry.

On the morning of the next day—Sunday, February 21st—we arose and looked for porters, but in vain. The despairing Reverend visited the houses of the Adanejan, who was bathing, and of the Buko-no, who was breakfasting. These men have at this moment the game in their hands, and know it; all we can do is to play at patience.

As sunset approached, the Buko-no and the Adanejan, accompanied by sundry eunuchs and slaves, entered our compound, manifestly bearing the wished-for "pass." They squatted on mats in the open space before our verandah, spread out the presents, and summoned us, in official tones and phrases, to receive them. The speech began with the usual formula,—that the King wished to send us home wealthy, and to supply us with specimens of his fine umbrellas, sticks, and other valuables (!); that he had not been made aware of our wish to depart (! !), and had learned it only last night, when we spoke of it to him (! ! !); consequently, that nothing had been prepared, but that on our return to Dahome we should find everything awaiting us (oh!).

The gifts were then distributed, a curious contrast with the magniloquence that introduced them. The first batch, about which I was ordered to be most careful, were for the Highest Personage in the kingdom. It consisted of a poor "counterpane," green and white, woven by the fat hands of the Adanejan; a huge leathern pouch for the royal tobacco, and a leathern bag to contain change of loincloth when travelling. Besides which, two miserable boys, hideous and half-starved, were sent as table attendants to the palace of St. James.

My fortunate self next received a "counterpane," a tobacco bag, and a sharp-looking boy, who, they warned me, and rightly also, would run away. Mr. Cruikshank was "donated" with a cloth and no boy. To Captain Wilmot were given a cloth and a boy, who were deposited at the English Fort, Whydah. Mr. Bernasko and Tom were largessed with very inferior "counterpanes," in which they grinned with all the fervour of gratitude. Finally, cowries for the road, barely enough to make us set out, and a few bottles of rum, were distributed amongst those heathens of endless bibacity, our hammals.

When the King's bounty had run dry, the Buko-no proposed a private "pass," that is to say, presents from himself. To this I strongly objected, but I was silenced by the unanimous assurance that my predecessors had submitted to it. After giving one "counterpane" to all the names above mentioned, the Buko-no and the Adanejan called for a private confabulation. I repeated, but in even stronger language, all that had been said before the King, pointed out that not a shade of concession had been made to the wishes of Her Majesty's Government, warned both confidants solemnly that by their fault friendship would not endure, and particularly commented upon the puerile demand for the immunity of slaves near the beach of Dahome. A specimen of their argumentation—their style of "pieceing out the lion's skin with the fox's tail": "You said yesterday," quoth the Buko-no, "that the English will no longer allow the export of slaves, and that the Americans will send their vessels no more." I assented. "Then, why," resumed the old man, "can you not promise that our ships shall not be molested during the very short time which, according to you, they have still to run?" No explanation would account for the impossibility of so doing, in face of the fact that the King had made a great point of this absurd claim. I fear we parted with this subject under a painful sense of one another's stupidity—*de part et d'autre*.

Finally, I was again officially requested to return after about ten moons, when the Atto-ton-khwe, or Platform Year Sacrifices, will commence, and, above all things, to bring with me, carriage, horses, and pavilion. My reply was, that I should advise all Englishmen to absent themselves from these vile "Customs" until beasts are substituted for captives; and that as regards my return with or without presents, all must depend upon orders sent out from home. Wishing to do away with any little asperity, I took, during the last interview, a friendly leave of the confidants, and sent them, in the course of the evening, handsome presents of cloth.

From Commodore Wilmot's report,* as well as from these pages, it will be evident that the caboceers are perfectly successful in isolating the King from the evil influences of foreigners. We were permitted to see him almost every day, but on no occasion to sit and converse with him. After nearly two months, a single private interview was granted to me, and two such visits were the most that could be expected. It is manifestly useless to send Missions to Dahome whilst this state of things endures. The only way to force improvement is to exact from the King a promise of change, which he would readily give; and, upon the strength of it, to demand hostages, about which he would demur. Finally, as I have before said, the Customs' time must be avoided; by far the best season for visiting him, is when the King returns from war, in April or May.

---

* Appendix III.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RETURN TO THE SEABOARD.

Monday, February 15, 1864.—We arose at dawn, ready to depart. Our porters, however, were, as usual, dispersed about the town, or drinking the King's rum, or quarrelling over his cowries, whilst the Reverend was settling the last accounts with Harpagon, our landlord. Vain were threats, the stick was vainer, as the carriers would only have run away. At last we collected a party of three hammock-men, and passed rapidly out of the red mud-walled box, where we had been closeted for fifty-six days. We felt some natural elation, although setting out upon what was fated to be the most comfortless march which I had made in Africa. The old Meu had been commanded by the King to supply us with bearers; but, not being bribed, he had found it better to forget the order. Everything, therefore, fell into the wildest confusion.

This time, by way of variety, we chose the Toffo, or western road, which anastomoses with the straighter main line at Hen-vi, and which, during the rains, is preferred by travellers.

The path, at first familiar to us, passed through the Uhun-jro market-place, and by the Komasi Palace, where our patience had been so often sorely tried; thence it struck into the open country. All was sunburnt, and, in many places, black with the fires whose smoke and glare, rolling up from the east and south-east, had not unfrequently, during the last fortnight, rendered my observations unreliable. At 8 A.M. we left on the right hand a bush market-place, under a shady tree, near some mat huts, scattered over the rough palm plantation—hereabouts the normal view. It rejoiced in the high-sounding name of Adanda-hogi-huto-gon,* namely, the place of the man that slew Adanda-hogi. We had no cowries wherewith to buy water; but the Sin-no in the fields readily gave us a draught in exchange for a cigar. Shortly afterwards we crossed a fiumara-bed, tending northwards: it is called Hun-to-nun, or canoe-water, and there are traditions that it once floated boats. The bed probably supplies the element in pot-holes at all seasons, and the ground on both sides is exceptionally stony. At 10 A.M., after 3h. 40m. (equal to ten miles) of "walking and tieing" our single hammock, we made Ahwansu-gon, the place of Ahwansu, a straggling village in the bush, landmarked from afar by magnificent bombax trees.

---

* Some of these names, ending in -gon, have an East-Indian twang; but it is an accidental and superficial resemblance between the Hindostani "gaon" (a village), and the Ffon "gon" (a place).

The servants had been sent on, after East-Indian fashion, the night before, to prepare breakfast.* Mensa Cook, two hulking school-pupils, Nahum and "Laja" (Elijah), with four slave boys, dashed by the King, were under charge of the bibacious Hinton. Uncontrollable as wild asses, they had walked off with only their own bags and boxes, and, reaching the first village, they had fallen asleep in some distant hut, where we found them with great difficulty, and roused them with greater. When in the anger of hunger we called for food, nothing was forthcoming. The better to abate that nuisance, the rascal Hinton was ordered to carry his effects himself—he preferred to remain three days behind until he could hire a porter.

---

* In a previous page I have said that the negro is the best of slaves, and the worst of servants: this will illustrate what I mean.

We had nothing to do but to sit under the fig-trees that formed the market-place, and to watch the domesticalities of the scene. There was scant regard for apparently poor travellers. A witty Persian book, the "El Nameh," defines El Hich, or "The Nothing," to be a Mogol walking (not riding) in India. The word is equally applicable to the "mean white" in Africa without a hammock, unless he is on fighting errand. Jenny Johnson, however, a Makhi woman, who had been brought up at S'a Leone, but who, having married and settled here, had forgotten nearly all her English, showed us the little civilities of offering maize and manioc. The supply of comestibles was limited to a goat, a few balls of Akansan, palm nuts, and water—the latter apparently the article most in demand. The dogs were almost all neutered, which must be as good a plan as the vow of perpetual celibacy for inducing a modified monomania.

After 3 P.M. the rest of the party straggled in, many with unshod feet lamed by the sun. Our score of laggard hammock-men came up sneakingly, and were threatened with docking of pay in case of their repeating the trick.* We could not help again remarking, with a cynical pleasure, that every rag, every empty bottle—even the broken drum and the cowrie-board belonging to the blacks who had been so long eating our salt, and to their master, had been brought on, whilst our five bags and boxes, the latter containing all our books and instruments, had been left behind. "It is all right," quoth the Reverend, "I have left the things in charge of Yamojia, the eunuch, who will be here with them soon." "But until every single item appears, O Reverend! we leave not this place." Of course the eunuch joined us at nightfall without a load, and of course I also kept my word. Otherwise, our properties might have been in Agbome to this day.

---

* At Whydah I was obliged, in several cases, out of the two dozen that

At 4 P.M., when the east wind had sunk the mercury to 85 deg. (F.), the market began to disperse, and the drums to appear. With the characteristic negro impudence, which ever pierces through Dahoman politeness, we were directed to remove from under our

---

accompanied us, to carry out the threat. This is an unpleasant duty, which the traveller owes to those who may come after him. The African even thinks the last day's good conduct enough to wipe away all his previous sins. It is well that he should learn his mistake. On this occasion the badly behaved were sent off campaigning without a present, whilst the others were liberally paid. I venture to say that the next visitor to Agbome will thank me for this severity.

favourite tree, and naturally we did not. Presently a wild-goose line of old and ugly Nesu women, first three and then nine, defiled into the shady space, and danced round the fetish hut. The *prima donna* was a very dark and ancient sybil, in a white night-cap ; the greater number had red, white, or coloured fillets, and two wore broad brims, with coquettish little steeple crowns that contrasted oddly with the vast expanse of sooty cheek and jowl below. Five of the superiors held cow-tails, and their ornaments were armlets of single cowries, divided by black seeds or red beans, and long belts of similar material crossing their ample covered bosoms. Being engaged in a very serious and religious exercise, they averted their heads and ignored us like the younger and more shame-faced sort of nun. The vulgar made "Ububu," knelt before them, and rubbed their foreheads against the reverend feet, whose owners, bending low, passed the open right hand over the laical occiput, and thus frictioned a blessing.

We slept soundly through a fine moonlight night in the lukewarm air, with the satisfactory feelings of men suddenly transported from Newgate to a yacht in the Mediterranean.*

---

* I would willingly have spent another month at Agbome ; but all

Tuesday, February 16.—Having sent back, before midnight, the eunuch and my krumen, I was not surprised to see them again at dawn: all were pining for the coast. At 7 A.M. we set out and crossed the outskirts of the Agrimé, or Great Swamp, over land here boggy, there cultivated, and rich in pine apples and wild solaneæ. High grasses then led us to Gome, the usual bush village scattered on both sides of the path: the next, lying on our left, and distant but a few yards, was Sémén; whilst a third, to the right, was named Akiza'-agbamen, the Broom in the Swamp. We then fell into a depression, where cracked mud-flakes showed that water had been, and would soon be again there. A few yards of rising ground then introduced us, after a march of an hour, equal to four miles, to the De-nun or Frontier Custom-House, whose "captain" lay on his back in aristocratic repose, his head pressing a soft Palmyra log, and a child playing between his legs as he watched, for want of other work, the ducks, the fowls, the poor devil niggers and ourselves.

The Harmattan still swept the air clear of cloud, threatening a torrid sun, whilst the thermometer stood

---

those around me were wild with impatience to escape, and the emotion is contagious.

at 83 deg. (F.), and the aneroid showed a descent of more than 350 feet. We hurried our breakfast, the more energetically as no food was to be bought at the De-nun; and at 10 A.M. we addressed ourselves to the Swamp. In some places, the burnt grass and trees robbed the road of shade, and in others we were canopied over with verdure. The flooring, everywhere hardened by water, was bad for the bearers' feet, but it was a decided improvement upon the Eastern or Agrime line. After forty minutes (equal to 1·50 mile), we made the Chito, a deep gully trending from east to west, with a southerly bend. The black earthy banks of this swamp-drain are steep, and fifteen feet high. Slatey and almost stagnant water stands at the present season in pools at the bottom, whilst the remnants of a bridge show the current to be deep and strong during the rains. The Chito, under a dense avenue of giant trees, was as algid as it was impure, but a dip in Dahome is a rarity and a luxury.

After the Chito, the path became tortuous, and to the eastward there had been a huge bush-fire, whose effects, in smoke and radiation of heat, still lasted. The sun became fiery—so did the ground, undefended by vegetation, and a gadfly, like the Tsetse, revenged us upon the lazy and laggard bearers. At noon, after 1h. 40m. (equal to three miles) from the De-nun, a roar of voices arose from Koje, a well-known market place near the southern edge of the swamp. It was a round hole cut clear in the bush, paved with hard mud and dotted with sheds, and logs for sitting. The aneroid still showed only 350 feet below Agbome, but the thermometer, though the breeze was fine, had risen to 94 deg. (F.) in the shade. The business seemed to be brisk, and we bought some tolerable palm wine.

Leaving Koje at 12·30 P.M., along a similar but a straighter path, hedged in by the tallest grasses, we soon emerged, as tall single trees growing upon sandy ground informed us, from the Great Agrime Swamp. After an hour of gradual up-slope, we saw on our right or westward well wooded ridges and high broken ground rolling away towards the blue distance. The nearer surface was greener, and the palms were thicker than about Agbome. The beauty of the Toffo plateau has not been exaggerated. It is supposed to contain gold, and it is all gold. Unfortunately, it is in the vulture claw of Dahome, and the officials of the capital have mostly houses and grounds where their palm-oil is made.

According to the History, the "Tuffoes," in the days of Agaja the Great, attacked, plundered, and murdered a peaceful caravan of Dahomans, passing through their lands. The merciless king justly attacked them, captured 1800 prisoners, and sold or sacrificed them all. In a foot-note we are informed "Tuffoe, Tafoe, or Tafu, is an inland country of the Gold Coast, nearly south-west of Abomy, ten to twelve leagues to the northward of Rio Grande, and at about sixty leagues, or six days' journey, from Ardra."* The tribe that inhabits it is called Aizoh, and is now blended with the Dahoman; and between them and Agbome I would place the "Croo-too-hoon-too" people of Mr. Dalzel. The last dissyllable is evidently a corruption of the "Hun-to" fiumara, which we crossed yesterday.

After 1h. 40m. (equal to four miles) we halted at the Toffo market-place, a few tattered sheds to the left of the path. Several of the morning's *corvée* were women, and they had lagged behind, footsore. Resolving, therefore, to halt, we walked for about half a mile to the town of Toffo, by a slow incline, on both sides of which rose dark palm trees, ruffed and sometimes double ruffed, with bright fern-tufts, and sheltering gay verdure, spangled with lilies. The settlement is the normal Dahoman, but comparatively clean and well built. The aneroid proved that we were but a hundred feet below Agbome, and though the thermometer was 99 deg. (F.), the wind was fresh and the air was elastic. I was visited by an old Hausa Moslem, whom the king had made chief of the Tokko village lying to the west. He brought his wife and his books, but, alas! he turned the latter upside down. The night was charming, and at 6 A.M. the mercury stood at 73 degrees (F.): it was our last experience of cool and dry skin. Adieu, "Sanitas!"

---

* R. 34.

Wednesday, February 17.—At 6 A.M. we left the fresh crisp air of Toffo. The bush path took a generally south-eastern direction, over ridgy ground, all ascents and descents. After about three miles, a plantation of palms and bananas led us to the Ajagbwe, a streamlet with sandy and pebbly bed, flowing westward, and not quite so deep as the Chito: it was a poor thing, but a pleasure to see. On the rising ground beyond it lay the settlement of Koli: we observed sundry aged and doubtless pious matrons on their knees at matins, before the fetish hut: unfortunately, for sentiment, they were also on their hands.

Beyond Koli, the bush again became dense, except where it had been cleared away for cultivation, and cardamoms everywhere appeared. The number of market people had made the path hard and slippery. At last a long descent led us, after two hours (equal to five miles), to the town of Hen-vi—Hold the Child—on the main road.

We had now returned to the climate of the plains: the thermometer showed, in the shade, 75 deg. (F.), and the aneroid 778 feet below Agbome. At Hen-vi the water was, as usual, vile, and two shillings were refused for the leanest of chickens. The road was crowded with soldiers hurrying up to the war, and there were many chain-gangs of unwilling men. Some of the passing caboceers attempted, but in vain, to seize our carriers, and even our hammock-bearers. The latter became every day more troublesome, and whenever they mutinied the Reverend begged a dollar and some rum to smooth their tempers. The huts, built at every hundred to two hundred yards for the late firing to Whydah, had almost all been burned down, and the villages were foul with fetish, dead dogs sacrificed for good luck, and poultry slain by order of Afa. We halted for so short a time at Allada, that we passed without knowing the Prince Chyudaton, who was marching northwards. I regretted thus losing the opportunity of having with him a few last words. The evening saw us at Azohwe where not a chicken was to be bought, and where only one old man was left to guard the women and children. What an opportunity to attack Whydah, or even Agbome!

Thursday, February 18, 1864.—We slept in the open, through a fine cool and dewless night. Before dawn, the Reverend, greatly dejected, awoke us with the tidings that all Whydah had been burned down yesterday. Naturally believing about a quarter of what was told us, we mounted hammocks, and in hot haste hurried through Toli and Savi. Arrived at Sogro's House, and just catching the morning sparkles of the sea, we saw at a glance that the damage had been extensive, and that the conflagration had not ceased. We wound south-westwards through the streets, where women were weeping, and carrying off their kit: as we approached the centre of danger we saw, at long intervals, men sitting upon their roofs with green boughs, to extinguish the sparks. Volumes of hot heavy smoke barred our road, and a crowd of natives opposed our passing through the Zobeme market, which was still a-fire. We wound round by the north, avoiding as we best could the burning poles lying on the ground, and the lighted straws that filled the air. All circumspection was required: in these places the flames run with a horse's speed.

We were happy to find the English Fort still standing, the inmates safe, and their property carried into the compound. The mulattoes were patrolling with drawn swords, to prevent plunder, and they had, we were told, exerted themselves to turn off the fire. But all went "hithering and thithering;" whenever a servant was ordered to do *this*, he forthwith did *that*; and my opinion was, that with the least change of wind the Fort would have inevitably been burned. The Whydahs afterwards declared that they had no idea why that house should have been the only building saved in the vicinity, and lest they might attempt to correct the exceptional nature of the phenomenon, I employed every wakeful hour at night in looking out with a loaded carbine.

The conflagration began, no one knows how, on February 17th, near the house of the late M. Josè D. Martinez: it was about noon, and the strong Harmattan had already lasted two days. The fire swept, in a broad straight band, from east to west. Sparing the northern quarter, it gutted the house of the Chacha de Souza, who, when informed of the calamity, nearly died with rage, like his brother chief. Of the French Factory, nothing was left but the slated and lime-washed frontage. The *gérant* had prudently started all his gunpowder into the well, but the loss in palm oil and stores must have been heavy—men named 300,000 dollars.

Apparently extinguished before sunset on the 17th, the fire again broke out at 8 P.M. The worst reports spread through the town, and all looked for some terrible disaster. Again, at 10 on the next morning, about three hours before our arrival, it appeared in the very heart of the settlement, all about the English Fort, sweeping away the Zobeme bazaar, and doing damage to the northwards of the yesterday's line. Even the late Mr. Hutton's quondam house was not spared, and it was "*murus proximus ardet*" with Mr. Bernasko's homestead. These fires are common enough in Yoruba towns—Lagos, for instance, where want of space compels men to build closely—but three fires in three days wore a suspicious appearance. Those whose houses were first seen in flames were imprisoned at the Yevo-gan's quarters, but they were not proved to be the real arsonists.[*]

According to the French missionaries, from sixty to eighty people lost their lives. Negro like, they watched the advancing flames incuriously till their roofs caught fire, when they would rush inside the house to carry off a cloth or a pipkin. Some two hundred were wounded, and two-thirds of the town appeared either burnt down or reduced to scorched clay-walls. This does not include the casualties amongst the slaves: many of the wretches were confined in barracoons, and there being no one to release them, they perished miserably. To make the confusion greater, the death of the Yevo-gan was rumoured,[†] and his successor, the Prince, was, I have said, absent. Though the roads were at once stopped, many will fly from this modern Sodom and Gomorrah.

* * * * *

I passed at Whydah a few quiet days, chiefly in the society of the French Mission. On February 23, 1864, tidings reached the fort that the King had set out on his campaign. Three days afterwards, I transferred myself to H.M.S. Jaseur, Commander Grubbe, who had the pleasant prospect of a tour round the Oil Rivers. Mr. Cruickshank shipped on board his own vessel, H.M.S. Philomel, Commander Wildman. After the scenes and chances through which we had passed during the last ten weeks, I parted from him with regret.

---

[*] In former days, according to Captain John Adams, the Dahomans, like the Fantis, always put to death the man in whose house a destructive fire first broke out.

[†] He soon recovered enough to summon me to his house, on the pretext that the King had appointed me governor of English Town. The invitation was declined—*not* with thanks.

* * * *

"Enough! now turn from that polluted shore."

CONCLUSION.

THE reader may not be unwilling to hear something of the catastrophe which concluded the negro Epos of the preceding pages. The following details are, I think, reliable: they are borrowed from the local prints, whose information has been corrected by subsequent inquiry.

Rumours of the intended Dahoman attack had long been rife at Abeokuta.* This year, the useless ditches were cleaned out, the wretched walls were raised and repaired, and to avoid the necessity of guarding a long line on the opposite bank of the Ogun river, a new parapet was thrown up on the near side. Stores of shot and powder were plentifully laid in, although for many months Lagos had refused to supply ammunition; the farmers were ordered to remove all their produce from the line of Dahoman march, and all the villages between Abeokuta and "the Lagoon" were deserted. The Ibashorun,[*] or Commander-in-Chief, took up his residence near the walls; scouts, sent out in all directions, brought in, on March 13, a Dahoman deserter, and on the 20th the public crier was sent round to warn all the inhabitants of the impending danger.

---

* When I visited Abeokuta in 1861, the chiefs, as well as the people, showed great fear of Dahome.

As has been said, on February 22[†] the Dahoman army left Agbome. Their stations were—1, Chotonun, where they halted four days; 2, Kurugba; 3, Aisunun; 4, Wonun; 5, Zirigbonun; 6, Aisocho-gon; and 7, Isume. Between the two latter they crossed the Opara River, the boundary between Dahome and Abeokuta. Ensued, 8, Refurefu, where they crossed the Iyewa streamlet, in the land of Okeadon: as it was deep, though narrow, they either repaired or made a bridge over it. The 9th station was Besho, the 10th Jiga, a little district belonging to the chief Akodu, where they stayed four or five days. Thence (11) they encamped near the Owiwi River, about twelve miles distant from their destination, and running between Igbara and Ishagga, scenes of their former triumphs. From the Owiwi River they marched (12) to Aro, by moonlight, intending, like wild beasts, to spring upon the enemy unawares, but they were seen by some people bathing in the Ogun river.

---

[*] Meaning, literally, a king who manages Heaven; not, as a correspondent of the *Times* has asserted, "A king in Heaven, opening out everything."

[†] The local papers say 24th of February, which is a mistake.

Thus the Dahoman army expended twenty-two days —twelve of work, marching from 6 A.M. to 2 P.M., and ten of rest—upon the hundred and twenty direct miles between the two capitals. They suffered severely from want of food, living on hard beans, parched rice, onions, and roasted palm-nuts. Many of them ate nothing but a little cassava for twenty-four hours before the attack. They marched in four battalions, under the Min-gan, the Meu, the new Ajyaho, and the Po-su,* and each caboceer had his umbrella, his flag, and his stool. Their forces were generally estimated at 10,000 to 12,000, including carriers, and the maximum named is 16,000, which we may readily reduce to half. They were accompanied by three brass six-pounders, one of Spanish manufacture, bearing date "Mexico, 1815."† There are conflicting reports concerning the

---

* The papers give the 4th battalion to the "Topo;" but the Tokpo (Chapter XIV.) is a common captain, and not of the blood-royal.

† Others say "Seville, 1805." They were mounted on Dahoman carriages, and having been spiked, the touch-holes were greatly enlarged.

King: some declare that he was not with the army, which was led by his brothers; others say that he did not cross the Ogun River; others that he approached the city wall, having left a force behind him at Igbara, lest the Ibashorun should fall upon his rear.

After their twelve miles' march on the Monday night, the Dahomans refreshed themselves in the Ogun River. A fighting draught of rum and gunpowder was then served out to them, and many are said to have betrayed its effects. The morning of Tuesday, March 15, 1864, was dull and foggy, and at 6.30 A.M. the attacking party crossed the river, under cover of the mist. They were presently perceived. The Abeokutan cannon at the Aro gate fired repeated signals. In a few minutes the Egbas, who had been all night at the walls, were swarming by thousands at their defences. Inside the town men hustled in all directions to the fight: the missionaries had some trouble in retaining a single servant for the purpose of serving out ammunition to their friends. The Egbas lined the wall from Agbameya to Aro, and only four townships—Ijeun, Ikemta, Itoku, and Oba—numbering one division, prepared to engage, the other two *corps d'armées* remaining at their posts, as it was reported that the enemy would make three independent attacks. The men amused themselves with throwing up their muskets and catching them, whilst the women sang and danced. The latter behaved well throughout a trying time, carrying spirits, water, and food to the fighters, and some, arming themselves with swords, kept near the walls in case they were wanted.

Not much encouraged by this reception, the Dahomans still advanced steadily, and in a dense body, over the hollow and broken ground, towards the gate where Gezo had met his defeat.* The Egbas had tunnelled their wall in many places, enabling them to sally out and to retire when convenient. A body of 400 braves leapt forth to engage the enemy upon the plain, but as he came on without returning their fire, they withdrew, true to their tactics, through their excavations. At this moment, an Abeokutan cannon was fired and dismounted from its carriage, so as to incapacitate it from further use. The effect, however, was to make the attacking party swerve to the right, where the wall was higher, and which therefore was supposed to have no defenders.

---

* I have described this Negro Marathon in "A Flying Visit to Abeokuta," Chapter III.

When within two hundred yards of the wall, the Dahomans displayed their banners,* and deployed in three bodies—one opposite the Aro gate, and the other two to its left: as was proved by the casualties, the centre was the best led. The line, about 700 yards long, then advanced within 300 to 400 feet of the defences, and a column, supposed to number 3000, arrived within half that distance. No breach was ever attempted. Did they expect to see the defences fall like the walls of Jericho?

The battle began at 7 A.M. with such a fusillade as Abeokuta has seldom heard. A tall stout warrior, dressed in blue, probably the Gau, or Commander-in-Chief, gave the signal to attack. The Dahomans obeyed by the usual impetuous rush, but as they approached the wall, their enemy poured a heavy volley into their serried ranks, and checked the general progress. For half-an-hour the firing was kept up in such quick succession, that it was impossible to distinguish the Dahoman from the Egban musket reports. Under cover of the smoke, many of the attacking party lodged themselves in the moat, hoping to surprise the wall, whilst the defenders, principally men of Ijeun, were prevented by the hot fire outside from taking aim at them. Some of the most desperate, especially the Amazons, threw large stones at the enemy, and snatched away six muskets that were pointed at them; others furiously scaled the wall, and were dragged over and slain by the Egbas. Some crept through the tunnels, and were instantly decapitated. One woman, who had lost an arm in the escalade, shot an Egba with the other hand, and fell back sabred into the trench. Three other Amazons, who had planted their banners on the defences, were cut down, and their heads and hands were exhibited on poles, with a shout of victory. This fighting at pistol distance lasted for an hour, during which seventy to eighty Dahomans fell in the trench; and of the Egbas ten to fifteen were killed and forty wounded. It ended, in fact, the attack.

---

* The "Iwe Irohin," of Abeokuta (April, 1864), says that the banners had "various distinguishing marks, as letters of the alphabet; especially J. O. N. and P. were seen."

At 8.30 A.M. the Dahomans, whose officers deserved to be hung, retired about two hundred yards from the walls. Some sat down, and the others kept up a hopeless fire. The Egbas were ordered to keep their places, lest the rush and the retreat might be a feint. Many of the young men, however, could not be restrained from an attack in the open, when the Dahomans again aroused themselves. The Egbas retired, and only small parties were sent out. Gradually, the Dahomans fell back upon the valley of the Ogun. Arrived at Aro, they kept up a sharp fire for some time, repulsing the assailants, and capturing three Egbas, who were, however, soon recovered. As no proper arrangements were made for the attack, so no measures had been taken to secure retreat.

About 10 A.M. a large reinforcement from the Agbameya Gate, after a circuit of three hours, fell upon the Dahoman rear, when, after two vain attempts to stand, all "skedaddled" in earnest. Another party from the Ikija Gate also opened fire upon the enemy, after he had crossed the river, and the Egba divisions at the Ishagga and Ibaka entrances marched out to intercept the retreat, which, from the heavy fighting in the Ogun valley, had now become a flight. Finally, the Egbas rushed *en masse,* shouting victory, outflanking the foe right and left, and causing a general "*sauve qui peut.*"

One division, in which it is supposed was the doughty King, went off unopposed, having the start of the enemy. The other two were mixed, and in confusion

—many flying off the roads into the fields. When too hotly pressed by the Egbas, they would turn and fire. Some refused to surrender, and were killed; others dropped on the way, and were captured; and others, fatigued by the march and the flight, were left behind in the pursuit, to be recovered on the next day.

The rout was now complete. The want of water—all the streams being dried up—and the mid-day sun told heavily upon the fugitives, who were faint with famine, and footsore by running on the path sides. They no longer kept together in large bodies. At Igbara they were attacked in flank by another party of Egbas, who had taken a short cut across the river. Here they lost many of their carriers, several hundreds of muskets—some quite new—and a brass gun, which had burst at the muzzle. At 3 P.M. the Ibashorun set out in person, and did not return from the pursuit till the next day at noon.

The Dahomans made another faint stand at their deserted encampment, but they were compelled to fly, losing a second brass field-piece, whose vent wanted bushing, the royal wives, daughters, horse, sandals with crosses of yellow metal, clothes, loads of coral and velvet, and sundry carriages : here, too, were picked up decapitating razors, and the stores of the King's household and of his guards. Beyond Ishagga, which they reached at 2 P.M., there was another severe encounter, but the Dahomans had the worst of it. They made a stand at the Owiwi River, vainly thinking to find water, and suffered severely. At Jiga they again met the Egbas before nightfall, and their pursuit continued till the fugitives, many of whom had marched thirty-five miles that day, reached the Iyewa River. Here the Okeadon people had broken down the bridge. A party, led by a son of the late chief, Anaba, killed 400 or 500 of their survivors, who were so exhausted that they could not be brought back.

The King's loss has been variously estimated. The Egbas reckoned "two heads, twenty strings, and twenty cowries," equal to 6821 men. The "Iwe Irohin" more moderately declares—"From Abeokuta to Ishagga, a distance of about fifteen miles, above 1000 were counted, whilst beyond that place it is said that the number of dead was still greater. The prisoners cannot be fewer than 1000 or 1200—some say above 2000." In the trench where the first attack was made, seventy to eighty bodies were found in two places, and of those fifty were lost by the central division. About fifty-five fell on the plain before the walls, and four women within the defences: some say that the latter were brought in captive, and killed. The Egbas cut all the bodies nearly to pieces—every one, even the women, passing a Dahoman corpse, cursed, slashed, or stoned it. The greatest destruction took place, of course, during the rout. It was impossible to number the prisoners who were brought in by various entrances at all times of the day and night, and many conveyed to distant villages. Up to 2 P.M. of the battle-day, Tuesday, more than 200 were marched through the Aro Gate: after that hour they were brought in much faster than before, and on the next day at an increased rate. Many surrendered themselves, begging food; others, picked up in the bush utterly exhausted, were sent in by the people of Jiga and Iketu, Otta and Okeadon. Some of the prisoners, especially the captains, were put to death on account of their violence. It was remarked that the greatest part of the killed and wounded were men, and that of four captives only one was born in Dahome. The total loss of the Egbas was about forty killed and 100 wounded.

A comparison between Gezo's and Gelele's attacks on Abeokuta gives the measure of Dahoman decadence. In 1851, the King assaulted on both banks of the Ogun, and the distance between the two points of the attack was at least a mile. He fought from morning till night, and was driven back but one mile to Aro, where he put to death fifty Egbas, who had been picked up whilst farming. He fought again at Ishagga, preventing further pursuit, and lost a total of 1200 soldiers. In 1864, Gelele attacks only on one side of the river, which he crossed at Aro: he takes to flight, in two hours, after losing 150 men. The place of the dead upon the field of battle can be traversed in two or three minutes; the rout ends in a "*sauve qui peut*," to the Iyewa River; and finally he hardly kills any of the enemy. Not more than one of ten Egbas fired a shot, and all were surprised to see the Dahoman army so small, and fighting so badly: they had harder work even at Ijaye.

According to the latest accounts, the incorrigible King at once bought a number of slaves, and returned to his capital a conqueror. After three weeks at Agbome, he despatched sundry of his brothers to drive and kidnap the country north of Porto Novo. About mid-February there was a report of his death. On

May 6, 1864, he was living; but he was so reduced in strength that he avoided all publicity.

Thus, in utter disgrace, ended the long-expected attack of the "Royal Savage" upon Abeokuta. Many years must elapse before Dahome can recover from the blow, and before that time I hope to see her level with the ground.

APPENDIX I.

ITINERARY.

FROM WHYDAH TO AGBOME.

CORRECTED BY CAPTAIN GEORGE, R.N., Royal Geographical Society of London, and EDWIN DUNKIN, ESQ., Greenwich Observatory.

INSTRUMENTS.

1.—ANEROID A (Pocket—Spencer, Browning, & Co., London).
On first floor of Fort Whydah, 30·60, temp. 80°.
On return, after two months, 30·30, ,, 91°.

2.—ANEROID B (Full size—Negretti & Zambra, London).
On first floor of Fort Whydah, 30·45, temp. 80°.
On return . . . 30·20, ,, 91°.

FIRST DAY—DECEMBER 14, 1863.

From Fort Whydah to Toli, 3h. = 11 miles.

Stage 1.—From Whydah Fort to Savi, 1h. 30m. = 5 miles.

Started 8·20 A.M. In five minutes, out of town. After fifteen minutes more, to Agbana water. In twenty minutes, to deep copse. At 9·50 A.M., Savi (Xavier of Mr. Norris).

Aneroid A, at 10 A.M., 30·50, temp. 85°.
,, B, ,, ,, 30·50. ,, ,,

Altitude of Savi = 44 feet.

Stage 2.—From Savi to Toli (half way to Allada), 1h. 30m. = 6 miles.

Started 2·30 P.M. Passed the Custom-House, crossed the Savi swamp in five minutes. Then Toli water. At 4 P.M., Toli (Toree of Mr. Norris).

Aneroid A, at 2·30 P.M., 30·35, temp. 92°.
,, B, ,, ,, 30·40, ,, ,,

On return—
Aneroid A, at 6 A.M., 30·50, temp. 76°.
,, B, ,, ,, 30·35, ,, ,,

Altitude of Toli = 180 feet.

SECOND DAY — December 15, 1863.

From Toli to Allada, 3h. = 11 miles.

(Total from Whydah, 6h. = 22 miles.)

Stage 3.—From Toli to Azohwe, 1h. 45m. = 6 miles.

Started 6·45 A.M. Forest country, few clearings, path narrowed. At 8·25 A.M., Azohwe (Azohwee of Commander Forbes).

Aneroid A, at 9 A.M., 30·55, temp. 78°.
B, ,, ,, 30·30, ,, ,,

On return—
Aneroid A, 30·00, temp. 95°.
,, B, 30·07, ,, ,,

Altitude of Azohwe = 144 feet.

Stage 4.—From Azohwe to Allada, 1h. 15m. = 5 miles.

Started 10·45 A.M. Land flat and wooded. Then large clearing. Denun, or Custom-House. At 12, Allada (Ardra, or Alladah, of old writers).

Aneroid A, at noon, 30·30, temp. 85°.
,, B, ,, 30·20, ,, ,,

On return—
Aneroid A, at 6 A.M., 30·30, temp. 79°.
,, B, ,, ,, 30·15, ,, ,,

Altitude of Allada = 284 feet.

THIRD DAY—December 16, 1863.

From Allada to Akpwe, 4h. = 13·50 miles.

(Total from Whydah, 10h. = 35·50 miles.)

Stage 5.—From Allada to Henvi, 2h. = 6·50 miles.

Started 6·40 A.M. Bush and clearings; hot road. After 1 hour = 3 miles, Attogon village.

Aneroid A, at 7·40 A.M., 30·30, temp. 80°.
,, B, ,, ,, 30·10, ,, ,,

Altitude of Attogon = 316 feet.
Reached Henvi Asihwe at 8 A.M., 2·50 miles from Attogon.

Aneroid A, at 8·25 A.M., 30·25, temp. 79°.
" B, " " 30·10, " "

Altitude of Henvi Asihwe=322 feet.

Reached Henvi Do-vo (Havee of Mr. Norris) at 8·45 A.M. Total time, 2h.=6·50 miles.

Aneroid A, at 9 A.M., 30·30, temp. 80°.
" B, " ". 30·15, " "

On return—
Aneroid A, at 9 A.M., 30·25, temp. 75°.
" B, " " 30·10, " "

Altitude of Henvi Do-vo=287 feet.

Stage 6.—From Henvi to Akpwe, 2h.=7 miles.

Started 10 A.M. After 50m., Whe-gbo. Forest land to edge of Agrimé swamp. At 2 P.M., Akpwe (Appoy of Norris, Apoy of History).

Aneroid A, at 2 P.M., 30·05, temp. 94°.
" B, " " 30·00, " "

Next morning—
Aneroid A, at 5 P.M., 30·25, temp. 71°.
" B, " " 30·02, " "

Altitude of Akpwe=417 feet.

FOURTH DAY—December 17, 1863.

From Akpwe to Agrime, 3h.=11 miles.

(Total from Whydah, 13h.=46·50 miles.)

Stage 7.—From Akpwe to Wondonun, 1h. 15m.=5 miles.

Started 5·20 A.M. After 15 minutes = 1 mile, of good path, began the Agrimé swamp. Two bad places, but no mud, at 6·45 P.M. Wondonun (name not mentioned in History).

Aneroid A, at 7·15 A.M., 30·50, temp. 83°.
„ B, „ „ 30·30, „ „

Altitude of Wondonun = 134 feet.

Stage 8.—From Wondonun to Agrimé.

Started 7·45 A.M. After nearly 1h. = 2·50 miles, to little village, Aiveji. Country improves, becomes more open, and rises northwards. At 9·25 A.M., Agrimé.
Time, 1h. 40m. = 6 miles.
Total march, 3h. = 11 miles.

Aneroid A, at 9 A.M., 30·50, temp. 83°.
„ B, „ „ 30·30, „ „

On the next day—
Aneroid A, at 4 P.M., 30·25, temp. 84°.
„ B, „ „ 30·15, „ „

Altitude of Agrimé = 232 feet.

FIFTH DAY—December 18, 1863.

From Agrimé to Kana = 1h. 30m. = 6 miles.

(Total from Whydah, 14h. 30m. = 52·50 miles.)

Stage 9.—Started 5·30 P.M. Road, hitherto north with easting, became north with westing. After 50m., at Fetish place, and 10m. more to Zogbodomen village. At 7 P.M. entered Kana (Calmina of History).

At Kana, in English House, December 19.

Aneroid A, at 8·30 A.M., 30·30, temp. 81°.
„ B, „ „ 20·20, „ „

Altitude of Kana=271 feet.

SIXTH DAY—December 20, 1863.

From Kana to Agbome=2h.=7½ miles.

(Total from Whydah, 16h. 30m.≐60 miles, and from the roads of Whydah*=62 miles).

Stage 10.—Started 3 P.M. Excellent road. At 3·50 P.M., Adan-we Palace. At 4·45 P.M. reached the Kana Gate of Agbome (Abomey of History). At 6 P.M. (slow walking) reached English House.

At Agbome, in English House, room facing eastward, mean of 60 observations—

Aneroid A, 29·65 } Average temperature (except when
„ B, 29·55 } harmattan was blowing) 81°.

By B. P. Ther. (good observations), 211° 25′, temp. 92°.

Altitude of Agbome=1065 feet.

N.B.—The Aneroids seldom varied more than 0·05 above or below 29·65 and 29·55.

The difference between dry and wet bulbs was from 4° to 10°.

The Preface to the History places Agbome in N. lat. 7° 59′.

The History places it in N. lat. 9° 50′.

---

* According to Norie, N. lat. 6° 19′ 0″.
According to Captain Phillips (1694), N. lat. 6° 10′.
According to Norie, E. long. 2°.

My observations of Sirius, corrected by Captain George, give a mean of N. lat. 7°.

My sketch-map places Agbome four miles to the east of Whydah, *i.e.*, E. long. 2° 4′ 0″. Mr. Townsend makes Abeokuta in N. lat. 7° 8′ 0″, and in E. long. 3° 20′ 0″. This would give an interval of 1° 15′ 0″=75 geographical miles, between Agbome and Abeokuta, agreeing with the reports of the people that the distance can easily be done in a week.

APPENDIX II.

Rev. Mr. Bernasko's Account Current with Captain Burton, H. M. S. Commissioner, Dahomey.

[*From December 8th,* 1863, *to February* 26, 1864.]

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Hammocks, from and to beach	1	15	3
Porters	0	9	0
Reception	1	7	0
60 Bags of Cowries, subsistence for hammocks, guides, porters, and tents	54	0	0
7 Cases of Gin	7	17	0
9 Pieces of Cloth	4	1	0
Presents to the King	2	5	0
Presents to the English Mother	0	9	0
Presents to the Wife of the English Host	2	5	0
Selim's ten days' board	1	2	6
John's seven months' board and medical attendance	6	15	0
8 Guides' Presents	2	18	6
John Beecham (pay to interpreter)	2	5	0
John Mark Lemon (pay to interpreter)	2	5	0
Cook	1	7	0
Servants	6	15	0

	£	s.	d.
20 Porters	4	10	0
Paid to the French Factory, Liqueurs for King and Chiefs	51	19	6
Paid to Mr. James Dawson, minor presents	5	8	0
Presents to the Blue and Fanti Companies	33	15	0
Presents to the Rev. P. W. Bernasko	11	5	0
Paid to 17 Hammock-men	11	9	6
1 Keg of 1-fifth Powder (salute at Whydah)	1	2	6
6 Krumen, with 4 Boys, one week's subsistence	1	4	6
	£218	10	3

APPENDIX III.

Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Peter W. Bernasko, Native Assistant Missionary, dated Whydah, November 29th, 1860.

[*From Wesleyan Missionary Notices, February* 25, 1861.]

I HAVE now returned from Dahomey, and, as you are anxious to receive from me an account of the Grand Custom, I take up my pen to give you the detailed particulars, full and true.

Wednesday, the 11th of July, I started from this, for Abomey, the capital, to see the Custom. I met with a man in the way, two days after my departure, nicely dressed as a cabboceer, coming down here; he was riding in a hammock, with a large umbrella and a cabboceer-stool, and a number of men accompanied him; and when I arrived at Cannah, a town next to Abomey, about eight miles distant, I learnt that the poor man was going to be thrown into the sea, to join the two porters of the sea-gate, to open it for his father to enter in and wash himself. Here was His Majesty the King, busy preparing to leave for Abomey to-morrow, because all the visitors have come.

Sunday, the 15th instant, by four o'clock in the afternoon, we all started, together with the King, for the capital. There were some bamboo mats and pieces of different kinds of cloth spread in the way up to the town, for him to walk on. When we reached midway, he made a stay for about an hour, and then ordered us to proceed on to the town to sleep; but he slept at the place.

Monday, the 16th, we all went out to meet him, to accompany him to the town; and when we had met him he bade us sit down. We then took seats. Here a man had his hands tied, and mouth barred, with a fathom of white bast wove about his loins. He pointed him out to us as a messenger that was going to carry private information to his father. The poor creature was taken up to the town, and was sacrificed on the tomb of his father. Another in the same position sent up to their large market to go and tell the spirits there what he was going to do for his father. About an hour afterwards, there were brought forward again four men in the same position, with one deer, one monkey, and one turkey-buzzard. Here the poor creatures had their heads cut off, save one. One man was to go to all the markets and tell all the spirits what he was about to make for his father; the second man was to go to all the waters, and tell all the animals there, &c.; the third man was to go to all the roads, and tell the spirit-travellers, &c.; the fourth and last man was to go up to the firmament, and tell all the hosts there, &c.; the deer to go to all the forests, and tell the beasts there, &c.; the monkey to go to all the swamps, to climb up trees, and tell all the animals there; the turkey-buzzard, fortunate creature, was let loose to fly up to the sky, and tell all the birds there. After this, he got up from his throne, which was carried along with him, and drew up his sword, and said, "As I am now a King for this kingdom, I will bring down all the enemies of my father under my footstool. I will also go down to Abbeokuta, and do to them as they once did to my father. I will sweep them up." He was seconded by his two chief Ministers, called Mingah and Mewu, who spoke to the same effect. After the speeches, we accompanied him to the town.

Tuesday, the 17th, he beat the gong, to fix a fortnight for the commencement of the Custom. The Europeans were quite annoyed at the time fixed, but tried to bear it with patience.

Sunday, the 29th, the Custom commenced. On the eve of the day the whole town slept at the King's gate, and got up at five o'clock in the morning to weep. And so they hypocritically did. The lamentations did not continue more than ten minutes; and, before the King came out to fire guns to give notice to all, one hundred souls had already been sacrificed, besides the same number of women killed in the inside of the palace.* Ninety chief Captains, one hundred and twenty Princes and Princesses,—all these carried out separately human beings by four and two to sacrifice for the late King. About two or three of the civilised Portuguese did the same. I believe they gave twenty men to be sacrificed, besides bullocks, sheep, goats, drakes, cocks, guinea-fowls, pigeons, coral-beads, cowries, silver money, rum, &c. After these three gentlemen, the King thought all the other proper Europeans should do the same for him; but none performed such wicked actions.

Wednesday, the 1st of August, the King himself came out to bury his father, with the following things:—sixty men, fifty rams, fifty goats, forty cocks, drakes, cowries, &c. The men and women soldiers, well armed with muskets and blunderbusses for firing; and when he was gone round about his palace, he came to the gate and fired plenty; and there he killed fifty of the poor creatures, and saved ten.

---

* Mr. Bernasko has since denied that women are killed in the palace, or elsewhere.—R. F. B.

Thursday, the 2nd, he threw out cowries and some pieces of cloth for his people to struggle for.

The King made himself of two persons, Ahorsu and Athopon.* The first means *King*, and the second means *hearth*—a place on which a fire is made.† The following words are his titles :—*Ahorsu Glere*, which signifies a heavy thing which cannot be lifted up by any number of men; so he is called a heavy King, cannot be lifted up by any nation. *Ahorsu kini-kini-kini*, means a dragon. He is a dragon King, that has strong claws, to tear to pieces all that will come in his way. *Ahorsu Taingay*, means a hard stone, cannot be pinched with a nail, hard King, that cannot be fought with by any small nations. *Ahorsu Yemabu*, means a shadow; he will never be lost in his kingdom; Shadow King. He said that his father was a King of blacks, and a friend of whites; but himself is a King of both.‡

During the Custom, the visitors and countrymen made enormous and wonderful presents to the King. The Custom continued for three weeks. We all stopped there two months before we got a pass out. I returned to this on the 1st of September, and went up again on the 12th of October, to witness the annual Custom. During my travellings up and down, I am glad to say that the God of Jacob was with me. I conversed with many people about religious concerns, and they were very glad to hear the word of salvation; only they fear the King. Almost every soul in this kingdom is willing to embrace the Gospel of our Lord;§ but the only hindrance is the Monarch. Many have a desire to send their children to our school; but they cannot on account of him.

---

* Query, Has taken a compound name?—EDS. No; the former is the King, the latter the Bush-king.—R. F. B.

† By no means.—R. F. B.

‡ See Appendix IV.—R. F. B.

§ What an assertion!—R. F. B.

Monday, the 15th, I arrived at Abomey.

Tuesday, the 16th, we were called to the King's palace, and at the gate saw ninety human heads, cut off that morning, and the poor creatures' blood flowed on the ground like a flood. The heads lay upon swish beds at each side of the gate, for public view. We went in to sit down, and soon after he sent out the property of his fathers, as follows:—two chariots, one glass wheel, seven plain wheels, three solid silver dishes, two silver tea-pots, one silver sugar-pot, one silver butter-pot, one large cushion on a wheel bar* drawn by six Amazons, three well-dressed silk hammocks, with silk awnings.

Three days after, we went to see the same things. I saw at the same gate, sixty heads laid upon the same place; and, on three days again, thirty-six heads laid up. He made four platforms in their large market-place, and on which he threw cowries and cloths to his people, and sacrificed there about sixty souls. I dare say he killed more than two thousand, because he kills men outside, to be seen by all, and women inside, privately. O, he destroyed many souls during this wicked Custom.

Sunday, the 4th of November, the whole town, with the King, fired guns from twelve o'clock till eight in the evening.

Monday, the 5th inst., I was very ill, laid up in bed three days, without a bit of bread or a drop of drink. I forgot to tell you, that ere this the King received a letter from Her Britannic Majesty's Government, about his frequent expeditions against Abeokuta, just warning him, that if he make any attempt, all his places on the coast shall be burnt. He has not yet given an answer to this. I was the reader of the letter. He seems quite frightened; and I dare say that he cannot take a step over. He has already sent out troops to war, but nobody knows where.

---

* Query, Wheelbarrow?—Eds. Yes.—R. F. B.

The annual Custom still continues, and the visitors have not returned yet; and had I not been sick, I could have had no chance of coming down.

The pit at Abomey, which was reported to have been dug deep enough to contain human blood sufficient to float a canoe, was false. There were two small pits, of two feet deep and four feet in diameter each, to contain poor human blood, but not to float a canoe.

I am sorry to report to you, that in our out-stations fightings are still continued. We desire your prayers very much.

RETURN TO AN ADDRESS OF THE HONOURABLE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, DATED JUNE 16, 1863; FOR

"A COPY OF COMMODORE WILMOT'S REPORT OF HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE KING OF DAHOMEY."

No. 1.

Commodore Wilmot to Rear-Admiral Sir B. Walker.

(*Extract.*)

"*Rattlesnake*," *off Lagos, January* 29, 1863.

My last communication was dated Lagos, 27th November of last year, and I informed you that I should return to Sierra Leone from Whydah.

Since that period much has transpired that will naturally cause the liveliest interest in all quarters.

I visited the Yavogah of Whydah on the 20th November, and having met the Rev. P. W. Bernasko, Wesleyan missionary in the English fort, he informed me that the King of Dahomey was most anxious to see somebody of consideration from England, "a real Englishman," with whom he might converse on the affairs of his country.

The Yavogah had said, "If you will come back again in seven days, I will send to the King, and let you know if he will see you."

I returned at the appointed time, much to his surprise, as he did not believe I should come back, and he told me the King was anxious to see me.

The Yavogah had sent up and said that I was a "good and proper person" to come out as a messenger from the Queen.

Before making up my mind to accept the King's invitation to visit him, there were many points to be considered of the very highest importance.

It had been said, and I believe with some truth, that our late attack on Porto Novo had enraged the King's mind to such an extent that he had expressed a strong desire to lay hands upon an English officer, in order to avenge the destruction of that place.

Porto Novo belongs to his brother. The European residents at Whydah had spread the most alarming reports of the disposition of the King towards Englishmen, and his hatred of them.

It was and is, of course, their interest to do so, and keep us in ignorance of their evil deeds.

After mature consideration I resolved to go, and place implicit trust in the King's good faith.

The position of affairs in this country seemed favourable for making an impression on the King, and opening the way to the establishment of friendly relations.

Having made my preparations for an absence of fourteen days, I landed at 10 A.M. of Tuesday the 22nd of December of last year, in company with Captain Luce and Dr. Haran, of the "Brisk," who had volunteered to accompany me.

The "Rattlesnake" and the "Brisk" were sent to cruize, and both vessels were ordered to return on the 14th of the same month.

We were conveyed in hammocks across the lagoon and through the wet marshy ground that is almost impassable in the rainy months, to a large tree at the entrance of Whydah, where certain ceremonies were gone through to welcome us to the place. We were received most cordially by the Yavogah and other officials, with drums beating, colours flying, muskets firing, cabooceers as well as soldiers dancing, the latter singing warlike songs.

We were also treated to the manœuvres of a slave-hunt.

As I am writing to save the homeward packet, and have much to occupy my attention, I must ask you to forgive the omission of many interesting details in my visit to this country, which shall be furnished to you whenever I can find time to embody them in a letter.

The Yavogah and Chiefs accompanied us to the English fort, where the King's stick was presented, and the health of the Queen of England and King of Dahomey drank.

Having secured our hammock-men, carriers for our luggage, &c., and guides, and being furnished with a body of soldiers to protect us on the road, we started the following afternoon, accompanied by the Rev. P. W. Bernasko and his servants, for our accommodation during our stay.

It was necessary to provide subsistence for all these people, a very large body of men, according to the custom of the country.

We arrived at Cannah, eight miles from Abomey, on the evening of Tuesday the 9th, where the King was holding his Court.

The King was scarcely prepared to receive us, and hence we were detained on the road longer than otherwise would have been the case.

It is supposed that, on this occasion, he was anxious to display all his grandeur and all his power, and my landing so quickly at Whydah had rather disconcerted him.

At all places on the road, the head men turned out with their soldiers, and received us with firing and dancing; also, the usual presents of water, fowls, goats, &c.

Speeches were made expressive of their desire to go to war, and cut off heads for their master. The war-dance was performed by women and children, and motions made with swords as if in the act of decapitating their enemies.

Some of their songs were very curious, which shall be described hereafter.

At all the villages where we slept, comfortable quarters had been provided, and water furnished.

Nothing could exceed the civility of every one.

The water is very bad, and there is great scarcity of it, particularly in the dry season. It must be very unwholesome.

The King had sent three of his sticks by special messengers to meet us on our way, with inquiries about our health, &c.

At 10 A.M. on the morning of the 10th, the King sent to say that he would receive us.

We accordingly went in full dress, and remained under some large trees, in an open space of some extent.

After a short time, the Chiefs arrived in succession with their followers, according to their rank, and were introduced to us, the same drumming, firing, dancing, and singing, being carried on as at Whydah.

This occupied a considerable time; and when finished we got into our hammocks, and went to the palace, outside of which, in a large square, were assembled all the Chiefs with their people, as well as large bodies of the King's soldiers.

The sight was most interesting: the gaudy colours of the large umbrellas, the dresses of the headmen, the firing of the muskets, the songs of the people, the beating of the war-drums, the savage gesture of the soldiers, and their ferocious appearance, made us feel indeed that we were amidst an uncivilised nation.

All, however, treated us with marked respect, while, according to custom, we were carried three times round the square.

After the third time we got down, and entered the palace gates, passing through a row of Chiefs on each side.

The court-yard of the palace is of great extent, and presented a spectacle not easily forgotten.

At the further end was a large building, of some pretensions to beauty in this country, being made of thatch, and supported by columns of wood, roughly cut.

In front of this, and close to it, leaving an open space for admission to the King, was placed a large array of variegated umbrellas, admitted only to be used by himself.

Under these were congregated his principal Chiefs. On either side of him, under the building, were his wives, to the number of about one hundred, gaily dressed, most of them young, and exceedingly pretty.

The King was reclining on a raised dais, about three feet high, covered with crimson cloth, smoking his pipe. One of his wives held a glass sugar basin for him to spit in.

He was dressed very plainly, the upper part of his body being bare, with only a silver chain, holding some fetish charm, round his neck, and an unpretending cloth around his waist.

The left side of the court-yard was filled with Amazons, from the walls up to the King's presence, all armed with various weapons, such as muskets, swords, gigantic razors for cutting off heads, bows and arrows, blunderbusses, &c.

They were seated when we entered. Their large war-drum was conspicuous, being surrounded with human skulls.

We advanced to where the King was sitting with due form and ceremony, and when close to him all the respect due to a King was paid by bowing, &c., which he gracefully acknowledged by bowing himself, and waving his hand.

We then sat down close to him, in chairs that had accompanied us from Whydah.

The conversation commenced with the usual compliments. He asked about my health, and how I had got on with my journey.

He then inquired about the Queen and all her family, asking many questions about the form of government in England.

I said the Queen sent her compliments to him, and hoped he was quite well, at which he seemed much pleased.

This being only a visit of introduction, not of delivering messages, therefore nothing political was entered into.

He then gave orders for his Amazons to perform a variety of movements, and to salute me, which they did most creditably. They loaded and fired quickly, singing songs all the time.

They are a very fine body of women, and are very active in their movements, being remarkably well-limbed and strong.

No one is allowed to approach them except the King, who lives amongst them.

They are first in honour and importance. All messages are carried by them to and from the King and his Chiefs.

Every one kneels down while delivering a message, and the men touch the ground with their heads and lips before the

King. The women do not kiss the ground, nor sprinkle themselves with dust as the men do.

When a man appears before the King, he is obliged to perform the ceremony of covering his head and upper part of his body with dust before he rises, as much as to say, "I am nothing but dirt before thee!"

It is a most degrading spectacle; but, after all, only the custom of the country.

After the Amazons had finished their manœuvres, they came to us, and gave us their compliments, singing songs in praise of their master, and saying they were ready for war, suiting the action to the word by going through the motions of cutting off heads.

The King then introduced all his Princes, Chiefs, and head warriors, in succession, according to rank; then the Chiefs and Captains of the Amazons: then the Princesses, daughters of the late king: in fact, he brought before us, and named one by one, everybody of importance in his kingdom. Some appeared in companies, and others separately. The mother of the King and the mothers of his principal Chiefs were also named and presented.

After each company was introduced, and I had bowed to them, a bottle of rum was given, the usual present after such a ceremony, and a signal that they had permission to retire.

To the head Chiefs a glass each was presented, which was drunk by themselves, or given to one of their followers.

When once in the King's presence, or in his capital, no one, European or native, can leave without this customary present.

We could not go away, on any one occasion that we visited him, without receiving his permission to do so in the shape of one or two bottles of rum for our hammock-men.

After all the presentations, the King called the Amazons again to salute us, and then offered us water and spirits, which he drank with us, which finished the visit.

No one is permitted to see the King drink: all turn their faces away, and a large cloth is held up by his wives while the royal mouth takes in the liquid.

The King then got up, it being almost dark, and walked side by side with me across the court-yard, through the gates, and nearly half-a-mile on the road towards our house, which was considered a great compliment. The whole Court followed, with the exception of the Amazons and his wives, who never join in such processions.

The soldiers shouted, and sang their war-songs, while the Chiefs went before the King to clear the road, and point out any dirt or inequalities of ground, before the royal feet.

The sight was imposing, and gave us a proper idea of the power of the King amongst his people. He seemed much feared as well as much beloved.

The King is a very fine-looking man, upwards of six feet high, broad shouldered, and a pleasant countenance when he likes. His eyes are bloodshot, which may arise from want of rest or other causes. He is a great smoker, but does not indulge much in the bottle. His skin is much lighter than most of his people, resembling the copper colour of the American Indians.

He is very active, and fond of dancing and singing, which he practises in public during the customs. He is much addicted to the fair sex, of whom he possesses as many as he likes. He is about forty-three years old.

Before leaving the palace the King saluted the Queen with twenty-one guns, from pieces of all sizes, lying on the ground, and firmly fixed in the sand. The largest was, perhaps, a 3-pounder: the trunnions supported them in the ground.

These guns are carried on men's heads, and occasionally placed on the ground, and fired off.

This was done as I entered the palace.

He also saluted me with nine guns.

The number of guns fired was shown by a corresponding number of musket-balls being produced in an iron pot.

We were accompanied from Whydah by the Prince who was ordered to attend us on the road, and found him most civil and obliging.

On arriving at our quarters after this day's ceremony, the Prince asked me to make a present to the soldiers and Amazons, in consequence of the manner in which the King had received me. He said he hoped I would not make him ashamed before his people, as he had brought me up, and was ordered to attend upon me. I immediately acquiesced, and made a handsome present, which was thankfully acknowledged. Whenever strangers meet in this country, they either drink with each other on their first arrival, or when they are about to depart. We had always to submit to this, which caused a great drain upon our resources.

The King's jesters danced before us to-day. One of the Amazons, in firing, had injured her hand very much by the bursting of the musket, and a messenger arrived from the King with a request that the doctor might be allowed to attend her. This was granted, and Dr. Haran saw her twice a day until the wound was healed, and a perfect cure made.

The wound was a very nasty one, and I think it was fortunate for the Amazon that the skill of Dr. Haran was called in.

We remained at Cannah until Sunday morning the 14th, when we went to Abomey, eight miles distant, where the King was to arrive in state and take up his residence in his own capital.

The custom of this country is delay, delay. No one knows the value of time, nor do they much care about keeping their word.

I frequently spoke to the Prince about seeing the King, and giving him the presents I had with me, without which no message can be given, nor private intercourse allowed.

I was told that the King would receive me in his capital, whither he was going to hold certain customs in honour of his "Father's spirit," that he wished me to see everything, how he went through the "custom," and what he did to his people. The Prince said, also, that he wished to salute me, and pass his people before me in review.

I found all remonstrances in vain, and that it would be useless to get up and walk away without seeing everything that was interesting in the country. My object was to witness the manners and customs of the King and his people, and as the King appeared so friendly disposed, and had got up so many things solely for my sake, I was determined to bear with patience and see what the end would be.

My policy was to be friendly with every one, and endeavour to show the character and disposition of an Englishman towards the nations of this country—that we could treat them with forbearance, and have some sympathy with a black man!

If I had lost my temper, and shown a disposition to be angry at the King's delay, I might have been received at once; but I should most assuredly have been sent back to Whydah without the opportunity of making a good impression on the King, or of witnessing any of those scenes which were afterwards displayed before us, and have made such a deep impression on our minds.

I have reason to believe that my line of conduct was rewarded by the whole country being laid open before us, and the whole people, King, Chiefs, and all, being our friends. The greater part of what we saw I firmly believe was entirely got up for my sake, and certainly no white man ever saw what we did, or was treated with such marked consideration.

Whenever strangers visit the capital, the same delay occurs, which causes general complaints. The more the King is pleased with his visitor, the longer the time he wishes to keep him.

While at Cannah the King invited us on the afternoon of two days to witness the firing of his Amazons and soldiers with ball at a mark.

I had asked him, upon my first interview, whether he ever practised his people in this way; he said "Yes," and I heard that he was then at Cannah for this purpose.

We found him about two miles outside the town in a very large open space, which had been cleared away, surrounded by his Chiefs and people, to the number of several thousand, preparing to practise at a number of goats, which were tied to stakes driven in the ground at intervals of about fifteen yards, under a mud wall of considerable length, and about ten feet high. They were placed on mats.

The King received us very cordially, and told the Prince to place us under his own umbrellas in a convenient place for seeing everything.

The firing commenced, and the King's body-guard of Amazons distinguished themselves by their good shots. The King fired several times himself.

Every shot would have struck a man.

The soldiers fired also exceedingly well, and taking into consideration the quality of the flint musket and the iron ball, which is jagged and fits loosely in the barrel, it is really astonishing at the display they made.

They would prove formidable enemies with good weapons, and if they possessed discipline and real courage.

Several goats were killed, and on the second day four of those despatched were sent to me as a present. These had been selected by the Amazons as a particular present to me, and until they were killed no other goat was fired at.

The firing was very rapid, and I certainly was astonished at the manner in which they handled their weapons.

On Sunday the 14th, in the afternoon, the King made his public entry into Abomey. First came the soldiers by companies, headed by their particular Chief under his umbrella, firing, dancing, and singing.

These went three times round the square in which we were, outside the palace. An excellent fire was kept up. Next came the Amazons in the same manner, dancing their dances, firing and singing, each company headed by a Captain of Amazons.

They marched better than the men, and looked far more warlike in every way: their activity is astonishing. Lastly, came the King in a carriage, surrounded by his body-guard of women, and drawn by them. He passed where we were, and we mutually bowed. I said to the Prince it was a pity he had no horses, which was reported to the King, who afterwards asked me if I would mention his wish to the Queen for some to be sent him as a present, which I said I would do.

I laughingly said to the Prince, "He ought to go full gallop round the square," which being told the King, he made the Amazons run round two or three times as fast as they could, much to the delight of his people; he then got out of his carriage, and was carried round in a very handsome hammock.

The whole afternoon was occupied in firing, dancing, and singing; when all was concluded the King came up and shook hands most cordially. We then went home.

The red sand here is a great nuisance, and finds its way into every part of one's body and clothes. Each day we found ourselves caked over with a crust, which required a good washing to get off; in five minutes a pocket handkerchief assumed a yellow colour.

I believe that some heads were cut off, during the night, on this occasion of the King's entry, and that it is the custom to do so whenever he returns. We could not find out how many, but eight heads were in the doorway when we passed the palace on the following morning, and it is probable that more of these trophies were inside.

We remained in Abomey five weeks from this time, and daily witnessed scenes of a very extraordinary character, such as the dancing of the Amazons, their warlike songs, the dancing and songs of the soldiers, the distribution of presents to the Princes, Chiefs, Captains, and headmen of the troops, the "passing" of the King's drummers, of the captains of the Amazons, of the King's jesters, and a variety of other people which appear before the King during the "customs."

A number of soldiers from the neighbourhood of Aghwey, hearing that it was the intention of the King to attack their country, had come up to Abomey to give themselves up to him, rather than take the chances of being taken, sold, or beheaded. They swore fealty to him, and it was curious to observe the ceremony on this occasion; after kissing the dust and covering themselves with sand, the King made a speech to them, and then the Prime Minister, in which was pointed out the power of the King and the greatness of his name; each Chief was called by name and presented with cowries and cloth, the two principal ones with a wife each. The whole company were then "passed" to their own country, by strings of cowries being given to them.

It is certainly very extraordinary to see what influence the King of Dahomey possesses, not only in his own country, but amongst the neighbouring tribes and nations.

He is feared by all; but still he is a true friend to those who seek his alliance, and is always ready to assist them.

We had an opportunity of observing this during the last five days of our stay in his capital.

Upon the last day but one of the "customs," late in the afternoon, a large body of soldiers, with their attendants carrying their camp equipage, made their appearance from a place about three days in the interior, belonging to the King. These men had been sent to the assistance of a small town belonging to a Chief on friendly terms with the King, who had been threatened by the Abbeokutans, and who had applied to Abomey for assistance.

The King had granted the assistance required, and despatched two of his head warriors with about 600 men for this purpose.

When these men arrived at the town they found that the Abbeokutans, hearing of their approach, had run away, and hence their return to Abomey.

It was a very pretty sight to see these men return and present themselves before the King, who made them a long speech, and gave them presents.

On the Saturday, six days after our arrival at Abomey, the King saw us privately in his own palace, and I made him the presents brought up for this occasion and which will be mentioned hereafter.

He was attended by six of his Privy Council, his most trusted friends, all well known to me; also by five of his principal wives.

He would only receive the presents from my own hands, which is unusual. I gave him first the picture of the Queen, and said that Her Majesty had sent this out to him as a mark of her friendship, and her wish to be on good terms with him. He took it in his hands, and admired it very much.

The Queen is represented in her coronation robes, with crown on her head and sceptre in her hand. The frame is very handsome, and the picture is a large one.

After looking at it attentively, he asked many questions concerning the dress, and then said, "From henceforth the Queen of England and the King of Dahomey are one. The Queen is the greatest Sovereign in Europe, and I am King of the Blacks. I will hold the head of the Kingdom of Dahomey, and you shall hold the tail." I then gave him a few small presents from myself, with which he was very much delighted and grasped me warmly by the hand. His council participated in these feelings, and said "At last good friends have met."

Now commenced the delivery of the message which I thought it my duty to lay before the King.

The first subject was the Slave Trade, and I said, "England has, for a long period of years, been doing her utmost to stop the Slave Trade in this country. Much money has been spent, and many lives have been sacrificed to attain this desirable end, but hitherto without success. I have come to ask you to put a stop to this traffic, and to enter into some treaty with me to this effect. I am ready to listen to any terms which you may reasonably propose, and to report to my Government what you have to say on the subject." I then reasoned with him on the iniquity of selling his fellow-creatures, and the benefits he would derive, even in a pecuniary way, by keeping these slaves in his country, and employing them in cultivating the soil. I tried to prove to him that the value of a slave thus employed would be far more valuable to him in the long run than if he sold him at once, and sent him out of the country.

I reasoned on the richness of the soil, and how easy it would be to introduce the silk-worm, cotton, coffee, and all the productions of a similar character. I tried to convince him that he was depopulating Africa, and making its inhabitants low and miserable.

I argued that if the Slave Trade were suddenly stopped, he would become a pauper, and that every man's hand would necessarily be turned against his neighbour's for daily subsistence, because all his supplies came from the "white man" from across the sea, and that these could only be purchased by the money obtained from selling slaves.

Stop the selling of slaves, and how could he possibly get the means of living, as the produce of the soil was comparatively nothing?

The people were entirely dependent on him, and his annual customs, for being fed and clothed; arms, powder, rum, tobacco, cloths and cowries, were all distributed on these occasions. And how were they produced? They were bought from the "white man," and paid for out of the money he received for selling his slaves.

I implored him to think over these things, and turn his attention to the cultivation of his soil, and the profits of legitimate trade.

I asked him how many slaves he shipped during the year, and how much he would take to enter into a treaty with us to stop it.

The next subject was the "human sacrifices." I said that not only England, but all Europe, deplored the sad spectacle of human beings, his own countrymen, being offered up on the occasion of his annual customs, in company with fowls, bulls, and goats. Could he not put a stop to this, and let it pass away from the customs of the country? I said that I knew all sudden measures were not only dangerous, but impossible, but that I hoped he would turn over in his mind the cruelty of these proceedings, and their utter uselessness to propitiate his gods, and that in time they would cease altogether.

The third subject was Abbeokuta. I said that the Queen and the English Government hoped he would not send his army to Abbeokuta; that peace was better than war, and that his people might be far better employed in cultivating the soil, than in destroying one another.

If he had made up his mind to go there, I hoped he would be merciful to his prisoners, and particularly that he would spare all Christians.

I next asked him if he was disposed to send a Chief of rank, and one that was in his confidence, to England, that he might see with his own eyes the wonders that civilization wrought in that country.

I said that he would be well received, and that his visit would no doubt have its influence on the King.

The opening of legitimate trade at Whydah was the next subject of conversation, and the reception of the English at that place.

Lastly, I spoke about the Missionary schools, and asked him to allow those who wished to do so, to send their children to be educated.

The King listened attentively to all my questions, and made several remarks during their delivery.

After they were finished, the usual ceremony of drinking was gone through, and he accompanied me through the gates of the palace far on the road to our quarters, amidst the cheers of the soldiers and people.

We remained a month in Abomey after the delivery of this message, in consequence of the "customs" going on, but nothing could persuade the King to let us go until this was over, as he was most anxious that we should see everything and report it.

Daily we witnessed his Amazons and soldiers, dancing and singing.

We saw his treasures pass round in the interior of the palace, preceded by all the principal Ministers, Princes, and Chiefs, in their Court costume.

The Captains of the Amazons passed round in the same way, and it was a very pretty sight.

The costume worn, the different colours displayed according to etiquette, the ornaments of silver round the necks, with an occasional skull at the waist belt of the Amazons, and the half savage appearance of all, notwithstanding their good manners and modest behaviour, was peculiarly interesting.

It was during the procession of the King's treasures, which will be more fully described in another letter, that the "human sacrifices" came round, after the cowries, cloths, tobacco, rum, &c., had passed, which were to be thrown to the people. A long string of live fowls on poles appeared, followed by goats in baskets, then by a bull, and lastly half-a-dozen men with hands and feet tied, and a cloth fastened in a peculiar way round the head, and carried in a basket by one man on the top of his head, furnished this part of the procession.

The men were carried three times round the square, the first time stopping opposite to where the King was sitting, where the bearers received a glass of rum each, from an Amazon in attendance. They then passed through the gates to the platform half a mile off.

The procession lasted two days, and "human sacrifices" passed round both days; on the first day eight went round, and on the second day six: half of these were killed, and half spared, so we were told. Probably they are only spared until the next "customs." The unfortunate men looked at us as they passed; but it was not in our power to help them in any way.

The King said they were criminals, who had broken the laws of their country, such as murderers, thieves, &c.; but I have every reason to know they were captives, mostly taken at Ishagga, from the peculiar marks on their face.

A day or two after these processions, the King appeared on the first platform: there were four of these, two large and two small.

His father never had more than two, but he is determined to excel him in everything, and to do as much again as he did. If his father gave one sheep as a present, he gives two; which he did when he sent me a present of cows, sheep, &c., according to custom.

The sides of all these platforms are covered with crimson and other coloured cloths, with curious devices, such as alligators, elephants, snakes, &c., from twelve to fifteen feet high; and the large ones are in the form of a square, with a neat building of considerable size, also covered over, running along the whole extent of one side.

You ascend by a rough ladder covered over, and enter the platform, which is neatly floored with dry grass, and perfectly level.

Dispersed all over this were Chiefs under the King's umbrellas, sitting down, and at the further end from the entrance the King stands surrounded by a chosen few of his Amazons.

In the centre of this side of the platform is a round tower, about thirty feet high, covered with cloths, bearing similar devices as the other parts. This is a new idea of the King's, and from the top of this tower the victims are thrown to the people below.

When the King is ready, he commences by throwing cowries to the people in bundles, as well as separately. The scramble begins, and the noise occasioned by the men fighting to catch these is tremendous.

Thousands are assembled with nothing on but a waist clout, and a small bag for the cowries. Sometimes they fight by companies, one company against the other, according to the King's fancy; and the leaders are mounted on the shoulders of their people. After the cowries, cloths are thrown, which occasions the greatest excitement.

While this lasts the King gives them to understand that if any man is killed, nothing will be done to the man who is the cause of it, as all is supposed to be fair fighting with hands; no arms are allowed.

After this the Chiefs are called, and cowries, cloths, &c., given to them. The King begins by throwing away everything himself; then his Amazons take it up for a short time, when the King renews the game, and finishes the sport. He changes his position from one place to another along the front part of the platform.

When all that the King intends throwing away for the day is expended, a short pause ensues, and, by-and-by, is seen inside the platform, the poles mentioned before, with live fowls (all cocks) at the end of them, in procession towards the round tower.

Three men mount to the top, and receive, one by one, all these poles, which are precipitated on the people beneath. A large hole has been prepared, and a rough block of wood ready, upon which the necks of the victims are laid, and their heads chopped off, the blood from the body being allowed to fall into the hole.

After the fowls came the goats, then the bull, and lastly the men, who were tumbled down in the same way.

All the blood is mixed together in the hole, and remains exposed with the block till night.

The bodies of the men are dragged along by the feet, and maltreated on the way, by being beaten with sticks, hands in some cases cut off, and large pieces cut out of their bodies, which are held up. They are then taken to a deep pit and thrown in. The heads are alone preserved by being boiled, so that the skull may be seen in a state of great perfection. The heads of the human victims killed are first placed in baskets and exposed for a short time.

This was carried on for two days. I would not witness the slaying of these men on the first day, as we were very close to them, and I did not think it right to sanction by my presence such inhuman sacrifices. I therefore got up and went into a tent, and when all was over returned to my seat.

It was upon this occasion that a circumstance took place which redounds highly to the credit of the King, and should be made known everywhere. While sitting in the tent a messenger arrived, saying, "The King calls you." I went and stood under the platform where he was. Tens of thousands of people were assembled; not a word, not a whisper was heard. I saw one of the victims ready for slaughter on the platform, held by a narrow strip of white cloth under his arms. His face was expressive of the deepest alarm, and much of its blackness had disappeared; there was a whiteness about it most extraordinary.

The King said, "You have come here as my friend, have witnessed all my customs, and shared good-naturedly in the distribution of my cowries and cloths; I love you as my friend, and you have shown that an Englishman, like you, can bear patience, and have sympathy with the black man. I now give you your share of the victims, and present you with this man, who from henceforth belongs to you, to do as you like with him, to educate him, take him to England, or anything else you choose." The poor fellow was then lowered down, and the white band placed in my hands.

The expression of joy in his countenance cannot be described: it said, "The bitterness of death, and such a death, is passed, and I cannot comprehend my position." Not a sound escaped from his lips, but the eye told what the heart felt, and even the King himself participated in his joy. The Chiefs and people cheered me as I passed through them with the late intended victim behind me.

I will not enter into my own feelings on this occasion; they can be easily understood: but the saving of even this one man's life was a sufficient recompense for all the delays and for all our detention. I felt that another victim would have been added to the sanguinary list of Dahomian sacrifices if I had not carried out that line of forbearance which I had determined to adopt.

The Chiefs all congratulated me, and shook me by the hand. Another victim was given to a Chief, a particular friend of mine, and he said it was on my account.

The "customs" were concluded by a day of firing, when all the soldiers, under their different leaders, marched past the King, and in review order before us. The King danced with his Amazons, and invited us to join. The firing was excellent, and did them great credit. The King must have expended an immense quantity of powder during our visit.

While the "customs" last the King does not transact any public business, and he told us that he had hurried them over on purpose that we might get away.

On the afternoon of Friday, the 16th January, the King asked me to review his Life Guardsmen and women, which I did, and he then made me Colonel or King over the whole of them, about 1000 strong each—an honour for which I had to pay dearly, according to the custom of the country.

Speeches were made by the captains of each, who were introduced separately, the whole tenor of which was what they would do at Abbeokuta, and the number of heads that would fall to my share, as I was now their Chief, and consequently had a right to a part of everything they took.

The following day, Saturday the 17th, the King saw us in private, as before, and said he was ready to give me his answer to the message I had brought.

He commenced by paying me many compliments, and said how glad he was that such a messenger had been sent, who by his patience and forbearance had shown himself a friend to the black man.

He then entered into a long history of his country in the time of his ancestors, and how anxious his father was to be friends with the English; that for many years past (he did not know the reason why) the English seemed to be hostile to him, and endeavoured to make all nations in Africa fight against him.

He said that the Slave Trade had been carried on in his country for centuries, and that it was his great means of living and paying his people. He did not send slaves away in his own ships, but "white men" came to him for them, and was there any harm in his selling? We ought to prevent the "white men" from coming to him: if they did not come he would not sell.

We had seen what a great deal he had to give away every year to his people, who were dependent on him: that this could not be done by selling palm oil alone. If people came for palm oil he would sell it to them; he could not carry on his government upon trade alone. If he gave up the Slave Trade, where was he to get money from? It was not his fault that he sold slaves, but those who made his fathers do it, and hence it became an institution of his country.

He said, "I cannot stop it all at once: what will my people do? And besides this, I should be in danger of losing my life." I asked him how much money he would take to give it up. He replied, "No money will induce me to do so; I am not like the Kings of Lagos, Porto Novo, Benin, &c. There are only two Kings in Africa, Ashantee and Dahomey: I am the King of all the blacks. Nothing will recompense me for the Slave Trade." I argued that it must be stopped in time; that even now very few ships came for them: and what would he do when it was all done? I found it useless to go on any further on this subject. He said there were plenty of blacks to sell, and plenty to remain; that the price of a slave was 80 dollars, with 4 dollars custom on each. On most occasions he is paid before the slaves are taken away, but sometimes he risks them on trust, and then he feels the capture of the slave-ship.

He said, "I must go to Abbeokuta: we are enemies; they insulted my brother, and I must punish them. Let us alone; why interfere in black man's wars? We do not want 'white men' to fight against us; let every one go out of Abbeokuta, and see who will win. Let the 'white man' stand by and see which are the brave men!"

He spoke strongly of Porto Novo, and said, "If my friends the English had sent to me, I would have broke Porto Novo for them." He does not want the "white man" to interfere in any way with the black man's quarrels. He promised faithfully, for my sake, to spare all the Christians, and send them to Whydah, and that his General should have strict orders to this effect. I asked him about the Christians at Ishagga. He said, "Who knew they were Christians? The black man says he is a white man, calls himself a Christian, and dresses himself in clothes: it is an insult to the white man. I respect the white man, but these people are impostors, and no better than my own people. Why do they remain in a place when they know that I am coming? If they do so, I suppose they are taking up arms against me, and I am bound to treat them as enemies. If a musket-ball touches the white man at Abbeokuta, am I to blame, if they will not go away when they know I am coming?" I reasoned with him no longer on this subject, because I thought his observations so thoroughly just and honest.

The next subject was the "human sacrifices." He said, "You have seen that only a few are sacrificed, and not the thousands that wicked men have told the world. If I were to give up this custom at once, my head would be taken off to-morrow. These institutions cannot be stopped in the way you propose. By-and-by, little by little, much may be done—softly, softly, not by threats. You see how I am placed, and the difficulties in the way: by-and-by, by-and-by."

We then came to a Prince being sent to England, which he said he would do if I came again to renew the friendship and give him the Queen's answer to what he had said.

With regard to the schools at Whydah, the King said, "Any of the mulattoes may send their children;" and I have no doubt, if he sees we are in earnest, that in a very short time he will allow his own people to do the same thing if they choose.

After the interview, which lasted some time, was over, the King made several presents, namely, for the Queen, a large umbrella made of different coloured velvets, with the devices emblematic of their customs; a large carved stool, which no one but Kings are allowed to possess; a pipe-stick and bag; a bag made from the leather of the country, with a lion worked upon it; a very handsome country cloth, and a long stick ornamented with silver, which can only be carried by the King. Also two girls, one about twelve, the other sixteen, very pretty and intelligent. I have left these last at Whydah, in charge of the coloured missionary's wife there, until I can learn the wishes of Her Majesty on the subject. The girls were taken at Ishagga, and I should think would be very interesting to the Queen.

In my next letter I hope to give an account of the resources of Dahomey, its form of government, the number of soldiers and Amazons, as well as a description of the country, and everything else that will be both valuable and interesting to know; also many sayings of the King, which I have not time to mention now.

We left Abomey the same evening, and were conducted with great honours to Whydah, where we arrived on Thursday afternoon, the 22nd instant, after an absence of fifty-one days.

I went on board the following morning.

Such a lengthened stay in the country of the King, and at his capital, could not have been effected without some expense; many presents of different kinds had to be given away, as well as money. The reception given me by the King demanded this, and I hope I maintained with becoming dignity the honour of the country. Trusting my proceedings will meet with approval, as I have only acted for the good of the public service, I have, &c.

No. 2.

Commodore Wilmot to Rear-Admiral Sir B. Walker.

(Extract.)

"Rattlesnake," at Sea, Lat. 3° 33′ *N.,*
Long. 6° 7′ *E., February* 10, 1863.

In continuation of my former letter of proceedings, dated Lagos, 29th January, 1863, I have to add the following additional observations on various subjects connected with my late visit to Abomey.

I have already remarked on the friendly disposition evinced by the King towards the English, as manifested in his manner to me on all occasions. "From henceforth," he said, "the King of Dahomey and the Queen of England are one; you shall hold the tail of the kingdom, and I will take the head:" meaning that we should have possession of Whydah for trading purposes, and supply him with everything.

He is most anxious for trade at Whydah, and if we can only prove to him that we are really sincere in our wishes to be friendly with him, I am quite certain that he will think very seriously of our proposals to him for giving up the Slave Trade, as well as the "human sacrifices."

Both of these are "institutions" of the country; the first, established and encouraged by the "white man" himself; the second, handed down from father to son as a principal part of their religious ceremonies, still enforced and fostered by the ignorance and superstition of the "fetish" priests.

Every house has its "fetish" hanging up, and every man has a "fetish" charm about his person. There is a devil fetish for driving away evil spirits, and another for bringing good luck. These consist of small mounds of earth with a calabash on the top, surrounded by cowries, or a repulsive-looking face carved out of wood. There are all kinds of images, such as lions, tigers, dogs, and other animals without a name, cut out in the rudest manner, and carried about in all great processions.

The roads, villages, and houses, are filled with "fetish" images, and sacrifices to the "fetish." The latter consist of goats, fowls, fruits, &c., being laid under a small mat shed, around the idol whom it is intended to propitiate,—dead, of course.

Men, women, and children, consult the "fetish" as to the food they ought to eat. Some are allowed to eat beef, others only mutton; many are prohibited to touch the flesh of goats. Poultry is permitted to some, eggs to others. This nonsense is carried on all over the kingdom, and strictly enforced; but I have never heard any one, man or woman, say that the "fetish" forbade them to drink wine or spirits.

We lived at Abomey, in the house of the King's chief diviner, a man of high rank and consequence, one of the Privy Council, and the King's adviser on all great occasions. The King never does anything without the diviner first consulting the "fetish," to find out whether it will be favourable or unfavourable. His house is full of "fetish" of every description.

I mention these things concerning the religion and superstition of the country, to show how impossible it will be for the King to give up at once the "human sacrifices." He himself says, "Softly, softly; it shall be done in time, but not yet; my head would be cut off to-morrow if I stopped it suddenly!"

A few have an idea of a Supreme Being, but still a very imperfect one. The King knows more of these important truths than any of his subjects, and we shall see the good effects of this knowledge by-and-by.

I will now enter upon a description of the country and its resources, its capabilities for legitimate trade, its present means of subsisting an hostile force, as well as of resisting an attack, the number and description of its soldiers, the dangers that would attend the landing of a force for the occupation of Whydah, and the difficulties to be encountered in retaining it when once in our possession.

Description of the country and its resources, &c.—The distance from Whydah to Abomey is sixty-five miles. It is extraordinary what mistakes former writers have made in giving the distance from Whydah to Abomey. Mr. Norris, in

1774, states it to be 150 miles; others more or less, according to exaggerated reports, or their own imagination.

Whydah is three miles from the sea. From the beach to Whydah the country is flat, and three pieces of water have to be passed over; the first is a lagoon that extends eastward to Lagos, with the exception of a portion of the mainland, three miles broad, and westward to Aghwey and Little Popoe. This lagoon is navigable for canoes all the year round.

The second and third pieces of water are through marshy ground, roads being cut through them, about ten feet wide, for the purposes of traffic, &c. These are almost impassable in the rainy season, and in the dry season contain about two feet of water, black and muddy, with a very bad smell.

In 1851 I caught the fever badly from passing through this very swamp.

Whydah is a large straggling place, containing some decent houses. There are three forts or factories, English, French, and Portuguese. The French is in excellent repair, and does great credit to the French gentleman who carries on his business there. The Portuguese is at present inhabited by missionaries of that nation, and the English fort is the residence of the Wesleyan Missionary, the Rev. P. W. Bernasko, a native of Cape Coast.

No one has any territorial rights in this place. The King of Dahomey reigns supreme, and could turn any "white man" away if he pleases.

There are a great number of guns, all spiked, 9-pounders and 12-pounders, in and around the English fort, which have been there for ages. There is a curious history attached to these guns, which I will relate, as it shows that the English are actually the hereditary friends of the Dahomian Kings.

During the long period that England acknowledged the Slave Trade as legitimate, and the stowage of slave-ships was regulated by Act of Parliament, the fort of Whydah was in a high state of preservation, and Englishmen were appointed as Governors, under the authority of the Crown.

They were always on good terms with the Kings of Dahomey, and in those days great presents of carriages and horses, &c., were made; some of the carriages I saw the other day at Abomey in a very ricketty state. They are kept as "heir-looms" in the capital, and pass round with the King's treasures.

These Governors had great power over every one, and communicated directly with the King, who obtained his supplies entirely from the fort. We had soldiers then to protect the place, and guns were mounted in all commanding positions.

A deep ditch surrounded the fort, which remains to this day. Whydah was a flourishing kingdom early in the last century, when it was conquered by Dahomey, who committed the most horrible outrages, and the country was reduced to desolation.

It must have been about the year 1750 that the people of Whydah, tired of the Dahomian yoke, rose against the King, and, no doubt, they would have been successful had not the English Governor shut his gates and turned the guns of the fort upon the rebels.

The Dahomian army came in from Savi, a considerable town in those days, four miles from Whydah, and the rebels were completely defeated, thanks to the English guns.

The King was very grateful to the Governor for his assistance on this occasion, and enlarged his privileges considerably; but at the same time he said, "This won't do; these English with their guns are formidable enemies, they may turn me out some day:" so he spiked all the guns in the fort before he went away, in which state they are to be seen to this day.

From henceforth, until a few years ago, the Kings of

Dahomey had a strong friendship for the English, and the King mentioned one man in particular in the time of his grandfather, Mr. James, who was Governor of the fort, and his "best friend."

The population of Whydah is large in comparison to other towns in the kingdom, with the exception of Abomey; it contains, probably, about 12,000 inhabitants, including the soldiers belonging to the Yavogah and Prince Chedathon.

I observed a great falling off in this place; twelve years ago it was in a flourishing condition, with many capital houses and merchants residing there; now, most of these houses are in ruins, and the trade is small. It will be well to consider the cause of this decline hereafter.

The great families of "De Souza" are either dead or dispersed; those that remain are of small importance to what their fathers were.

Stock used to be plentiful and very good; at present it may be obtained, but not in such abundance; it is also dear to what it was formerly. Water is plentiful both from the lagoon and by wells, which are to be found in all large houses: it is very good. Fruit, such as oranges, pine apples, and bananas, is cheap and abundant.

From Whydah to Abomey the whole country is a flat level, and there are regular villages which are considered as established "halting places" for the traveller.

The want of water begins after you leave Whydah. There is a dark deep swamp about three miles distant, over which (that is, the road through it) large pieces of timber have been placed so as to form a bridge, the crossing of which is a dangerous operation. The water is black and muddy.

The country through which we passed varied much, from open plain to thick forest. There is no other road than the one by which we travelled. A great part of the country is well adapted for cultivation, and would produce cotton, silk, coffee, indigo, sugar, and everything else that grows in similar climates.

Around the villages the ground is cultivated, and produces Indian corn, cassada, beans, &c., just sufficient to maintain life. As we approached Abomey, more extensive tracts of ground were under the hands of the farmer, chiefly belonging to the King, who has to distribute largely to all his people.

People have no time for peaceful pursuits: war, war, war is alone thought of, and the King gives them no rest. Many of the Chiefs complain of this, and seem heartily tired of it. I am sure they would gladly turn to a better state of things if they dared. They have no time to themselves; there is always some "custom" going on, and hence the country is in a state of desolation, and the population is gradually decreasing.

There are some noble trees in the jungle through which we passed. One measured nearly 100 feet round its base, and the stem went up to 70 or 80 feet, without a knot or branch to rob it of its beauty. This was the "cotton silk tree," of no use whatever, either in its fruit or timber. The branches were magnificent, and I counted thirty some 50 or 60 feet in length, of enormous size, and covering a great extent of ground. As far as we could see and learn, the trees of this country produce no timber fit for any purposes of building.

I never saw such a scarcity of the necessaries of life. Cattle, sheep, and goats, are few in number: these are only kept by the King and Chiefs, who do not seem to understand that their wealth would be increased by breeding largely and keeping up a good supply. The use of milk is unknown. Fowls are not plentiful; we paid 2*s*. each for them.

The Chiefs rarely eat meat, the people never. They live upon "cankey," which is made from Indian corn, and mixed with palm oil.

They are ardently fond of spirits—the common rum that is imported by nearly all traders: it is very strong, and they prefer it to wine or good brandy.

I was astonished at the scantiness of the population. As we passed through the villages, nearly everybody turned out to see us.

After we had left, every soldier in the place went on to Abomey to swell the numbers there. There was not a man to be seen on our return—none but women and children. There may be other villages out of the direct route to Abomey, and no doubt there are many, because the kingdom is a large one; but still the great question of the population of Dahomey has been unquestionably decided by my visit.

We everywhere expressed astonishment at meeting so few people, which accounts for the small portion of land under cultivation. There are far more women than men—I should say three to one, which may be the reason why the Kings of Dahomey, who are always at war, are obliged to raise and keep up the Amazons, or "women soldiers," to the extent that they do.

As war is made one of the necessities of the State, a constant drain upon the male population is required, and it naturally follows that the supply is never equal to the demand; hence the remarkable circumstance of nearly "5000" women being found in the Dahomian army.

There is, probably, another reason for thus brutalising the minds and feelings of the softer sex in this country, which is, that the King may think it a good stroke of policy to encourage and patronise these Amazons to the extent that he does, for the purpose of creating a rivalry amongst the men, which will incite them to prove their courage and their strength beyond that displayed by the other sex.

The Amazons are everything in this country. The King lives with them and amongst them; they are only to be found in the Royal palaces. When they go out to fetch water, which is every day and nearly all day, the one in the front (for they all follow in single line) has a bell round her neck much like a sheep-bell in England, which she strikes herself whenever any person is seen approaching. Immediately the men run away in all directions, and clear the road by which the Amazons are coming. They then wait till all have passed. The reason for this is, that if an accident were to happen to any one of these women, either by her falling down and breaking the water-jar on her head, or if the water-jar fell off her head, the unfortunate man who happened to be near at the time would be immediately seized, and either imprisoned for life, or have his head taken off, as it would be supposed that he was the cause of the accident.

No wonder, then, that they get out of the way as quickly as possible. We were always obliged to follow this custom; women are not expected to avoid them in this manner. It is one of the most absurd laws that even a savage nation can pass, because it stops business, and delays everybody on the road. All day long the sound of this bell is heard, and people are seen flying away. The Amazons seem to enjoy it, and laughed heartily when we stepped aside to avoid them.

Whatever may be the object in thus keeping up such a large body of "women soldiers," there is no doubt that they are the mainstay of the kingdom. I put down the number at 5000; besides these there are numerous women to attend upon them as servants, cooks, &c. We certainly saw 4000 under arms at Abomey, and there are more in other parts of the kingdom residing in the Royal palaces.

They are far superior to the men in everything—in appearance, in dress, in figure, in activity, in their performances as soldiers, and in bravery. Their numbers are kept up by young girls of 13 or 14 years of age being attached to each company, who learn their duties from them; they dance with them, sing with them, and live with them, but do not go to war with them until they have arrived at a certain age, and can handle a musket.

These women seem to be fully aware of the authority they possess, which is seen in their bold and free manner, as well as by a certain swagger in their walk. Most of them are young, well-looking, and have not that ferocity in their expression of countenance which might be expected from their peculiar vocation; but many have passed that time of life when all passions have ceased to animate, and make their mode of life at least worth retaining.

They are supposed to lead a life of chastity, and there is no doubt that they do so, because it is impossible for them to do anything wrong without being discovered, and such discovery would lead to certain death. The King alone has the privilege of selecting any of these women for his wives, which is rarely the case.

As soldiers in an African kingdom, and engaged solely in African warfare, they are very formidable enemies. They fully understand the use of the musket, and load and fire with remarkable rapidity. Their activity is surprising; they would run with some of our best performers in England. The "Captains" carry the skulls of their enemies in their girdles, and an occasional jaw is also seen.

During the mornings and evenings large parties of these women are sent to fetch water for the use of the King and his household, a distance of many miles. It is a very pretty sight to see long strings of women, with water-jars on their heads, wending their way silently and quietly across the country to where the wells are; the only sound to be heard is when the leader rings her bell for the road to be kept clear.

Water at Abomey is the great drawback of the place. There is none in the town: it all comes from the swamps, three or four miles in the country. Women are the principal water-carriers, although men are employed also. At this season of the year it is very scarce and very bad. The process of getting it is this. An embankment is formed round the large pools, which are filled from the draining of the marshy ground, very dirty of course. Around this large holes or wells are cut, into which the water filtrates from the pool. Smaller holes are again cut next to these, into which the water percolates, being this time tolerably clear. Into these small holes the women dip their calabashes, and in process of time the water-jar is filled: it is a long operation.

This clear water is only, however, for the higher classes, and for those that can afford to purchase it. The poor people drink from the muddy pool, and are thankful for what they get.

The ground is not favourable for boring, being a mixture of iron-stone, granite, and sand. It sounds hollow as you walk over it.

We visited all the wells, and it is certainly surprising how such a large population can live upon such a limited supply of water.

The "men soldiers" are more numerous than the "Amazons," and are armed in the same way. They are also very active and expert with their weapons. I should say that the King could not bring into the field more than 6000 fighting men. This number, with the "Amazons," will amount to 10,000 altogether. I am quite certain that this is the full extent of his power.

All these are armed with a musket and short sword, and against their own countrymen would be formidable. Their fighting is not like ours, but a system of strategy, cunning, and surprise; their object being to arrive at the intended point without being heard or seen. Should they succeed, so much the better for themselves; if not, they fight for an hour or two in a desultory sort of manner, without order and without discipline; after which, if they cannot carry their point, the whole army runs away, and makes the best of its way back to the capital.

It is in the pursuit, as well as in the capture of a place, that the great sacrifice of life is made. Heads are chopped off without mercy, and brought in to show the prowess of the captors. It was in the pursuit of the Dahomian army by the Abbeokutans in 1851 that the Amazons were so dreadfully cut up. We were told at Abomey that they lost thousands. Many die also from hunger and exposure, and it is in consequence of these continual wars that the population of Dahomey is decreasing every year.

The population of Abomey varies very much according as the King is residing there or not. It is a very large and straggling place, nearly surrounded by a deep ditch, with gates in different parts. This ditch is now filled up with trees and bushes, and must have cost much time and labour to make. Abomey is probably seven miles round, but it must not be inferred from this that the inhabitants are in proportion. I should say 20,000 is the maximum. The want of population is seen everywhere. If a census were taken of all the Dahomian territory, 180,000 would, I am confident, take in every man, woman, and child. Even this number seems to me, on reconsideration, to be too much. Women and children form three-fourths of the whole.

Large tracts are passed through without a living creature being seen. If the forests were cleared, the brushwood cut down, and the inhabitants were allowed to make use of their time in peaceful pursuits, there is no doubt that the country would produce everything that is valuable. It would support a population of many millions, providing some means were found of obtaining water, which might be done by Artesian wells.

There are no regular roads, but merely a footpath all the way, which, for many miles in some places, passes through a dense forest, while at others it is across an open plain, with long grass, bushes, and weeds on either side.

The chiefs and head men ride upon small ponies, which originally came from Abbeokuta. These perform the journey from Whydah to Abomey, and there is no reason why larger animals should not do the same, as the road is good, with the exception of the swamps and water which have to be crossed. There is a swamp with a very bad road through it, nine miles long, about eighteen miles from Abomey, which is impassable during the rainy season. Even the natives have great difficulty in finding their way. It was dry when we walked across, and therefore in its best condition, but we were very glad to get to the end of it. It is full of deep ruts and holes, and very narrow. The bottom is of a dark, clayish character, and very slippery when the least wet.

From Cannah to Abomey, a distance of eight miles, the road is broad enough for a dozen carriages to drive abreast, and in Abomey, and around it, horses might be galloped in all directions.

The country at this time of the year, namely, from the middle of November to the end of April, is remarkably healthy, at least we found it so; for a period of fifty-one days we never had an hour's sickness. It is much cooler on shore at this season than at sea, although the temperature is high; still the atmosphere is not oppressive, and during the harmattan winds it is positively cold: we experienced this on two occasions, the water becoming in one night almost too cold to drink. It affects the natives very much, drying up their skin and lips, and preventing them from washing, as they cannot stand the change. We, of course, enjoyed it.

The natives are lightly clothed, and are very active on their legs. One of the principal Chiefs at Abomey told me that he suffered very much from being obliged to find his way through the bush when he last went to Abbeokuta.

APPENDIX III.

C.

DAHOMEY, ITS PEOPLE AND CUSTOMS.

THE following letter has been received by the Duke of Wellington from the celebrated lion-hunter, M. Jules Gerard :—

[*Times*, August 18, 1864.]

"Monsieur le Duc,—Your Grace is well aware that few men gain by being seen close, unless they are men of intellect and merit. The King of Dahomey, despite his cognomen, which signifies the 'Eternal' or the 'Infinite,'* fully justifies that rule to which he is no exception. Physically he is similar to the other blacks of his country—tall, well built, a head like a bull dog. The most usual expression of his countenance is that of cunning and cruelty.† His moral qualities are in perfect keeping with his physical conformation; he is more gracious than the Kings who have preceded him, fanatical for old traditions and customs. The traditions of that microscopic court are to turn the whites to the best possible account (*exploiter les blancs*), but especially to induce them to make presents.

---

* This is pure fancy.—R. F. B.

† I did not remark it.—R. F. B.

It is the custom to excite the people with sanguinary spectacles, so as to be able to carry off the neighbouring population when a slave-dealer makes an offer to the King and also at the annual custom of human sacrifices.

"I have just spent twenty days at Kana, where the King was staying for the celebration of the lesser ceremonies. On the day of my presentation I was conducted across the Market-place, where twelve corpses were exposed to view on separate sites. Six were hung up by the feet, the six others were upright, like men about to walk. Those whom I saw close were horribly mutilated and not beheaded.* An enormous pool of blood covered the ground beneath the scaffold, giving unmistakeable evidence of previous sacrifices and of the tortures which accompanied them.† Our reception by the King was brilliant, very cordial for myself as well as for the French Consul;‡ but we were soon able to convince ourselves that this was but a comedy always performed by this poor Paladin to get the presents brought by the whites. Born and brought up in the midst of these spectacles, which would be ridiculous if they were not horrible, the present King is actually more fond of them than his subjects. I saw him on that day admiring with the delight of a child the grotesque dances and ridiculous pantomime of his ministers, and then of the princes, and then of all present, for our amusement. A most infernal music, which nearly deafened us, delighted the King, who seemed to be in a state of ecstacy; and this, M. le Duc, lasted for six hours. On the following day his Majesty invited us to witness a procession of the King's riches. On reaching the square of the Palace (read huts) an agreeable surprise had been prepared for us. The entrance gate was flooded by a pool of blood two yards in width, and on each side a column of recently decapitated heads formed two immense chaplets. It is true that on this day the King wore the emblem of Christ on his breast. It must be presumed that it was the cross of execution that he meant to imply by this ornament. As regards the procession of his wealth, it consisted of a few old carriages, bath chairs carried by men with figures like Polichinello. One thousand women carried each a bottle of liquor on her head, a brass basin in the shape of a footbath to receive the blood of the human victims on the day of the King's banquet; an image of the Virgin; various baskets-full of human skulls; an image of St. Lawrence, as large as life, carried by blacks; finally the *drum of death.*

---

* The mutilation took place after death.—R. F. B.

† There had been no previous sacrifices, and no tortures.—R. F. B.

‡ Others represented the contrary.—R. F. B.

"At another festival the King commanded on foot his Amazons, who manœuvred with the precision of a flock of sheep. On the Market-place already mentioned each step was ornamented by a dead body; and the King came and went in the midst of pools of blood and fragments of human flesh in a state of putrefaction. On this occasion he had daubed his face with coal.* The ceremony terminated by a mad dance, in which the King took part, dancing *vis-à-vis* to drunken soldiers and musicians. Such are, M. le Duc, the man, the Government, and the people whom we have hitherto hoped to turn into a path less contrary to the laws of humanity. I regret that Captain Burton should have arrived at Kana just at the moment of the King's departure, as he might have been enabled to see and judge of all these things.

---

* Read, "with three streaks of gunpowder."—R. F. B.

"I am, M. le Duc, your most obedient servant,

"JULES GERARD.

"P.S.—On the day of his departure the King invited us to a review of his army prepared for war. It was from 12,000 to 14,000 strong, comprising 12,000 Amazons, 1000 men of the body-guard, and 2000 archers."*

N.B.—The letter is interesting, as giving the darkest view of things Dahoman.—R. F. B.

---

* These are all numerical errors. M. Gerard probably means 1200 Amazons.—R. F. B.

APPENDIX IV.

CATALOGUE OF THE DAHOMAN KINGS,

WITH

THE DATES OF THEIR VARIOUS EXPLOITS, THEIR "STRONG NAMES," AND THE EVENTS OF THEIR REIGNS.

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
1.	His Nyí, or "natural name," known to all the people, is Dako: also called Do-nun, "Know-thing" (which nobody else knows). Hence the "Ta-coodonou" of the History. Like the modern kings, he took (jije) a Nyí Siyen-siyen or "strong name,"	1625.	His princely origin at Allada, and his migration north, are told at length in Chapter V.; his conquest of Adan-we, in Chapter X.; his building the palaces of "Adan-we" and "Danh's Belly" (whence the corrupted name "Dahome"), in Chapter V. He also conquered Pakhi, a little district between Adan-we and Kana and Addéin, on the left hand coming from the latter place to Agbome. He enthroned himself at Agbome

	or title, after every new exploit, and for this object killed one of his mothers-in-law, because she asked for some European cloth which had been promised to her. His principal titles, recited to the gong-gong, are: 1. As he is king, he will lay low all who do not bow to his sceptre. 2. A fetish charm that nothing can harm. 3. Flint-striker is not kept in sheath. 4. He kills a person that the dyeing-pots may be upset. There are many others, equally fanciful and unintelligible.		about 1625, and probably was born the beginning of the seventeenth century. His cousin, Sawalu, offended by not having an important post, fled to the Makhi, or northern hillmen; but was defeated by Dako. The heralds place the founder of the dynasty second in order on their list, as he was a captain, not a king, and they speak of him as the "Palm-tree planter." He died, after a reign of 25 years, at the Adan-we Palace; which, according to some, was given to him by its king, Awesu.
2.	His natural name is	1650.	Aho was son of Dako; but, after sinning

Order.	NAMES.	Date of Accession	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
2.	"Aho," which has no signification. The History calls him Adahoonzou, which (as Adán-hun-zo) means, Brave soldier has fire or heat. This is probably some princely or trivial title, for the gong-gong begins thus:—" Aho-ho-o-o Demanakpo (he must kill all nations), Ahwandogozo Matonya (ready to meet any enemy unawares), Edo addanun nyanbara 'o" (when he swears against the foe the foe is afraid), &c. &c. His strong names are: 1. He will break the walls of the surrounding	1650.	the sin of Absalom, he fled to the bush, and lived long with the hunters in the plantation villages. At his father's death he returned to Agbome, slew the King Agri, and built over him the Palace of Agri-go-men (Chapter X). He conquered a number of small places, for which reason his name is placed by the heralds at the head of the dynastic list, before that of his father. After reigning 30 years, he died in the Agbome Palace, and his spirit is "watered" at "Aho's Gate," opposite the open space called Patin-sa.

	peoples to hold Dahome. 2. If the nations have any tricks, they must not come near him, nor go to any place; but they must take him out.		
3.	Natural name Akaba (*i. e.*, A'Kábá, "Oh, tall, strong man!"). He is also known as Hwes' Akabá, whence probably the History's name, "Weebaigah." His strong names are: 1. He flung a cutlass, and the owner of the country resigned to him his lands (alluding to his throwing a sword at Yaghaze, the conquered King of Weme). 2. A big club,	1680.	Akaba was the brother of Aho, and wrested the kingdom from his nephew Abosasa, who, flying to the Oyos of the north, stirred up a useless war. He was a great conqueror; but the names of few of his conquests have come down to us, the principal being Jegbe, or Jigbe, in "Weme," near the Nohwe Lagoon, the "Denham Waters" of our charts. According to others, Weme, the Weemy of the History, is near Grand Popo. Some, again, make it part of "Porto Novo." It has long ago been "broken;" but a few people, it is said, still linger there. Akaba, the last of the pre-historic kings,

Order.	Names.	Date of Accession	Various Exploits, etc.
	as he is, he will break down all the surrounding thorns. 3. He was not before death, or he would not have allowed it.		reigned about 28 years. After his death "it was that, by the assistance of writing, each transient fact was fixed, and scattered information collected into a body; it was then that tradition gave place to record, and legend to history."
4.	Natural name Agaja, which is part of a sentence, meaning, "A branching tree (*i. e.*, one that meets you in all directions) must be lopped before it is thrown into the fire." The History calls him "Guadja Trudo:" the latter word is a "strong name," signifying "dashing" (*i. e.*, throwing large presents to	1708.	This warrior and conqueror, who may be called Agaja the Great, is said also to have usurped the throne. He began by subduing countries to the north-west of Dahome, especially Didouma and Povey, names now unknown. Being refused, by Allada and Whydah, a passage to the coast, he captured the former, and slew the king, in 1724. He carried to Agbome Mr. Bulfinch Lambe, whose letter from his palace bears date November 27 of that year. He then received the submission and tribute of "Jaquin" (Jackin, or Jakin), a little

	people). Mr. Bulfinch Lambe's surname, Trudo "*Audati*" is quite unknown to the heralds. Commander Forbes writes, with usual cacography, Agah-jah-dooso. The latter word is "Dosu," a name universally given in Dahome to a boy born after twins. The fourth king's principal strong name is: 1. "Dosu asks to see, and then takes by force from the owner." He is the first king whose mother's name—Addono—is known, and who claims funereal rites and sacrifices.		maritime country, west of Whydah. He defeated, by stratagem, an army of Oyos, and appeased their king by many presents. In February—March, 1727, he took Savi, capital of Whydah (Chapter V.) with terrible bloodshed, and sacrificed 4000 prisoners. He carried up to Allada forty white men, whom he treated civilly; and in April, 1727, he was visited by Capt. Snelgrave (Catherine galley), who published his observations ("A Full Account of Some Parts of Guinea, and of the Slave Trade," 8vo), describing the king as "the most extraordinary man of his colour that he had ever conversed with." After this Agaja turned his attention to the "Tuffoes" (Toffos), who had insulted him, conquered them with 3000 regulars, and sacrificed 400 prisoners, much as is done now. In 1728, the Whydahs, under a captain called "Ossue" (Fosu?) attempted a return to their country, and were protected by Governor Wil-

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
4.		1708.	son, of the English fort. The perfidy of the French Governor caused his fort to be blown up, and subsequently his death. The Whydahs brought down another army of Oyos, which, after doing great damage, departed. About August, 1729, the Whydahs, under their king, returned to their old settlement, and were protected by the forts. Agaja, having few men, raised the first Amazons (Chapter XV.), beat Ossue, and drove the king into the English fort. Agaja caused Mr. Testesole, the English Governor, who had grossly insulted him, to be barbarously murdered. Having married one of the King of Oyo's daughters, Agaja signally defeated the Makhis, who had aided his late enemies. The small coast countries, Weme, Jakin, and Akpa (Appah), were driven by fear to revolt, and were supported by the Dutch Governor,

			Mynheer Hertog. In March 22, 1731-2, an able Dahoman general, with 15,000 men, made the second conquest of Jakin, which he surprised: the king and M. Hertog escaping with difficulty to Akpa. He rifled the European factories, and ordered the offending white men to march on foot to Allada, where, however, he treated them kindly. Agaja the Conqueror was a Scourge of God: the chief object of his wars was conquest, not consolidation; skulls, not men; extermination, not accretion; and this fatal policy he bequeathed to Dahome. After a reign of 19 years, he died in 1727, aged 45.
5.	The natural name of the second historic king is Tegbwesun, which belongs to the mysteries of the Bo-Fetish, and, as often happens, begins a phrase:	1727.	Tegbwesun succeeded his father, to the prejudice of his eldest brother, Zingah, whom he threw into the sea, it not being lawful to shed royal blood. After seeing his enormous cruelties, the Meu, or second minister, rebelled in 1735, but was crushed and slain by the Gau, or

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
5.	Tegbwesun Au, or avo (cloth), agbo (the wild bull), ko (neck), kron-kron-gro (no one can take it off). The History, followed by modern popular writers, calls him "Bossa Ahadi," an appellation now completely unknown to the heralds. His strong names are: 1. He is like the hoe handle, he will break the legs of all nations. 2. The truth of another man's wife is not doubted. A thing in his hand shall never be taken by any other person. The mother of this king was named Chai.	1727.	Commander-in-chief, and the rebel's younger brother was appointed in his stead. The Oyos attacked him in 1738, and invested Agbome. Tegbwesun fled twenty-five miles to Zaffa (a name now unknown), and met Mr. Gregory of the British fort, Whydah, who accompanied him to a hiding-place. The Gau, hearing that his master was in safety, evacuated Agbome, which, as well as Kana, was plundered and burnt. The Oyos returned, and their general was disgraced for not capturing the enemy's king. They plundered Dahome every year till 1747, when the King agreed to pay them, in November, at Kana, an annual tribute, which lasted till the days of Gezo. In 1750, King Akwasi, of Komasi, crossed the Volta to punish Dahome, and was defeated. Tegbwesun began a war of conquest against the Makhis in 1737: in 1752 his general took

the stronghold called Boagry (Bowule ?), with great bloodshed, but the war continued, the King being also engaged with the old Whydahs and Popos. In 1764 he again attacked the Boagry mountain, and sent the Meu to supersede the Gau, who at once fled to the Makhis. The Meu was defeated; Jupera, the King's favourite son, died; and Tegbwesun made peace with the enemy in 1772.

The Whydahs ever strove to return to their own, and still crowned their kings at the old capital, Savi (Chapter V.) In 1774 Tegbwesun supported a younger brother of the exiled royal family, who murdered the rightful heir, and devoured his heart, afterwards dying miserably of leprosy. Five or six hundred Whydahs had settled under the protection of Sr. João Bassile, of the Portuguese fort. This gentleman was invited to Agbome, and arrested on the road by the Gau, whose army, marching to exterminate the Whydahs,

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
5.		1727.	encamped on "Gonnegee" (Agonji, Chapter III.), to cut off their retreat. The Gau extorted money from Sr. Bassile, till a negro servant in charge of the fort told him that he was being deceived, and warned the Whydahs to defend themselves to the last. The Gau attacked the Portuguese fort, November 1, 1741, entered it after great loss, and put all to the sword. The Governor's servant blew himself up, and his second in command was roasted over a slow fire at Kana. Tegbwesun set Sr. Bassile at liberty, rebuilt the fort, and disavowed the acts of his general. The treachery of a woman led the Dahomans to Jakin, whose people they extirpated. In 1777, Sin-men-kpen (Adahoonzou II.) re-established a few families there. In 1743, the Whydahs and Popos attacked Whydah with a large host. The Gau was

			engaged with the Oyos and Makhis: the post, however, was valiantly defended by the Kakawo (Caukaow), or local general, by the Yevogan or Viceroy—these two were slain—and by the Savi caboceers. The victorious Whydahs invested and starved the forts, when the King, recalling the Gau, sent him with 50,000 men, and easily drove out the enemy. Tegbwesun appointed, as Yevogan of Whydah, a wealthy eunuch named Tanga. This man, resolving to be King, attempted, in August, 1745, to seize William's Fort. Mr. Gregory, however, resisted, and the rebel fortified his own house. Warned by his priests that his safety depended upon reaching the English fort, he collected his men, and all his hundreds of wives, to whom he had been "not the rigid jailor, nor the tyrannic usurper of their affections, but the generous arbiter of their liveliest pleasures," cut one another's

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
5.		1727.	throats. The house then was set on fire: Tanga sallied out, and was at once shot. Shampo, a brother-in-law of Tegbwesun, became the object of his King's jealousy, and warned by his sister (who sent a knife and noosed cord concealed in victuals), he fled to Popo, and commanded their army till his death, in 1767. The old Gau, who had long and faithfully served the King, was disgraced under the suspicion that he meditated desertion to the Makhis, and was cruelly killed—half beheaded and then strangled. In 1753, Tegbwesun sent another army to reduce the Whydahs and Popos. Shampo drew them on, and, entrapping them in the lagoons, slew all, at a place called Griji, but twenty-four, whom he sent as messengers to the King. Tegbwesun put the survivors to death, with a message to their comrades

that he much disapproved of their conduct in war.

In 1762, M. Caillié, the French Governor, Whydah, was charged with selling contraband of war to the enemies of Dahome, and was expelled the kingdom.

In 1763, the Popos and Whydahs, under Affurey (Fori), son of Shampo, again attacked Whydah (see Chapter IV.) They were defeated by the energy of Mr. Goodson, who, under the name of "Ajangan," is remembered by the royal family of Dahome to this day.

In 1772, Mr. Robert Norris, Governor of William's Fort, Whydah, visited the King at Agbome, and, like Mr. Archibald Dalzel, in 1766, he was hospitably received. The published account is very interesting, showing how little changed is the complicated Dahoman ceremony during the last century.

Tegbwesun died, 70 years old, on May 17, 1774, after a long reign of 47 years. He was

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
			the terror of his subjects, but a friend to white men. His palace still exists (Chapter XVIII.) in a place outside Agbome, known as Adan-do-kpo-ji Daho.
6.	The natural names are two: Sinmenkpen, the rock in the water—Sín (water), men (in), and kpen (a stone)—and Kpengăla, from Kpen, a rock, and gălá, strong or brave. His strong names are: 1. He is not to give in to anybody, as the sellers do to the buyers. 2. The seller of hoes never puts some into the buyers. The History calls him Adahoonzou II. It is clear,	1774.	Sin-men-kpen at once determined to support Eyee, "the monkey," a Whydah chief, who was contending for the government against Abavou (Agbaba'vun), or the Swamp-dog, the son of the prince who ate his brother's heart. "Abavou," after a stout defence, delivered himself to Dahome as a peace-offering for his men, and was duly beheaded, his calvaria being mummified and preserved with all honour. Upon this, the King, at the instigation of the Meu, the "Cokee" and the "Tovey" (the latter two names and offices now unknown), disgraced his Yevogan, slapped his face, and sent him

	however, from p. 133, that Adanhunzo was the princely, and not the royal name. It mentions two of his "titles:" 1, Ai-yaw-soo, or the male oyster, probably from being hard to crack (this is some old Whydah word, which in modern Ffon would be Adankpwen 'su); and, 2, Yee ma sa hoo beate cofru gloh, "an elephant cannot shelter himself under the swish-baskets" (in a dialect which I am unable to determine). The name of this King's mother is Hunájile.		to a state prison, whence he never emerged. Mr. Lionel Abson, the English Governor, tried to save him, but unfortunately used finesse. The King heard of it, and told his visitor, "I wish you had not been so much of a Dahoman-man as to have made use of any artifice." In 1775, the King attacked the "Sarrachees" (Siráchí, a Nago or Aku tribe, mixed with the Makhi), who seized his So-gan, or Captain of Horse commanding the rear. This brave man, when pressed to return, refused, sent a message to thank the King, and fell upon his sword. The Sarrachees defeated the Gau, when the command was given to the Po-su, or second general, who was beaten and killed. In 1777, the King sent a large army, under the Gau, who conquered the enemy, and barbarously ravaged the country. In 1778, the King of Allada agreed to attack Appee (Appi Vista) by water, and Dahome to assault by land. The latter had

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
6.		1774.	four divisions, led by the Gau, the Po-su, the "Zoheinoo" (Zokhenu, the Amazon deputy Mingan, or grand executioneress), and the "Phussupoh" (Fosupo, now the Amazon deputy Meu, but in the days of the History a man officer). Hooroo, an Apee chief, with 800 men, attacked them in the swamp, killed in single combat a Dahoman Captain, Allopwee, and fought till he and his party fell to a man. The victors took 500 male adults, besides women, children, and much booty. The Apees left their King at "Weme," which was friendly with Oyo, attacked the Alladas, forcing their way through them, and fell upon the Dahoman rear. All the Apees were slain at the next year's Customs, and five women were barbarously murdered for endeavouring to escape. The King stood over the execution-

ers, who were the women of his palace, instructing them, "not that way—hold your cutlass thus—give it me—'tis so (moen dé, a favourite phrase)—imagine you are chopping wood!" &c.

The King then gave each caboceer a string, measuring ten yards, the intended width of road from his capital to the beach. He cut through the Agrime swamp, filled up gullies, and widened the hurdle bridges. Traces of this enlightened labour remain to the present day: Commander Forbes has called this King the Macadam of Africa.

In 1781, after the death of the wealthy old Meu, the Oyos demanded, as tribute, 100 of his women. Sin-men-kpen sent his Kakawo to collect them in the Agunah country, and this officer being slain, he marched in person at the head of 800 women. The people fled to Sirachi, but their caves were smoked by fires strewed with pepper, till the two Kings

Order.	NAMES.	Date of Accession	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
6.		1774.	and 1800 subjects surrendered. He of Agunah died on the march. "Sirachi" was thrown from the platform in the normal basket, "tied like a hog." The year 1782 concluded with a famine and great mortality. In 1783, after a little raid of the Dahomans upon the Badagry beach, Sin-men-kpen sent his Gau, who fell into an ambuscade, and escaped with difficulty, losing the Po-su. The Alladas acted treacherously, and one of the rival chiefs of Badagry, Onum ("son of Prince Davee") (the other, Ginguem, having been banished by his subjects to Bahia), sent, through the Governor of William's Fort, Whydah, a long letter to the King, accusing his allies. Sin-men-kpen replied, "My name is Deddi ma tronu ("Déddé" is slowly; the other words are not intelligible), meaning, I

am easy in my pace, but always in pursuit; let Ardrah take care of his own country."

In 1784, the King, joined by Makhis and Nagos, with guides from Oyo, to which country he promised to send his prisoners, and reinforced by an alliance with the chief of Lagos, attacked Badagry. Prince Davee and his generals, the Oclah and the Po-su, sallied out: the two former were killed, the latter was wounded, and 5000 heads were sold by the Dahoman troops to their King. The Fosupo and Po-su of Dahome went in quest of the enemy's women, who had fled towards Lagos, and the Alladas duped the victors by plundering the place. The Oyos, also, had a plan of carrying off the Dahomans and their spoil, but they were baffled. The Fosupo, having failed to take the Badagrian women, wiped out the disgrace by applying a loaded pistol to his mouth. The Customs of 1785 were very grand, and as 127 skulls were

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
6.		1774.	wanted to complete the decoration of the palace wall, as many people were killed in cold blood. In May, 1786, Weme, which had offended Oyo, was attacked by Dahome, and by 100 Makhi caboceers, with their trains: it was utterly destroyed. By the King's order, the "Coki," or second caboceer of Whydah (a name now unknown), and the Kakawo, with 300 soldiers, kidnapped from the "Porto Novo" beach fourteen Frenchmen, one Portuguese, and eighty Gold Coast canoemen. They were ransomed by M. Gourg, Governor of the French fort, Whydah, for £4,600. The King of Allada complained of this outrage to him of Oyo, and the latter sent to Sin-men-kpen, that "Ardrah was Oyo's calabash, out of which nobody should be permitted to eat but himself."

The Dahomans were greatly alarmed, but presently they attacked the old Whydahs, and carried off a few baskets of salt.

In 1788, the King attacked "Croo-too-hoon-too" (supposed to be near Toffo and the Aizoh people, Chapter XXIV.), but the Gau and the Po-su were repulsed. The victors sent five caboceers to beg pardon, and to offer a tribute, which was accepted. The Gau, however, secretly followed them home, and put all the people to the sword.

Shortly after this, Agbome and Kana were visited by an earthquake, which shook down part of the palace walls, and extended to Agunah and other places. The King applied for an explanation to the Europeans, who improved to little purpose the occasion, by preaching him. After this we do not hear of an earthquake visiting Agbome till July 10, 1862, when the shock, so fatal to the eastern

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
6.		1774.	Gold Coast, startled the present King (Chapter XIV.). In the next year, Sin-men-kpen marched out with six divisions, feinting at Popo, and falling upon the large town of Katoo (Iketu), he butchered the inhabitants, and carried off 2000 slaves. The sixth King died of small-pox, April 17, 1789, after a warlike reign of 15 years. I have alluded to "Lize-hun-zo House," his palace, in Chapter XVIII. The History mentions one called Gree ma zon baw (Gree, field; má, not; zon, send; 'gbo, goat)—You do not give a goat a plantation to sow corn in (because he eats it all), or, You do not send a goat to make a plantation. At Sin-men-kpen's death, 595 women were slaughtered by their companions, according to the common usage of the palace.

7.	The grandfather of the reigning sovereign bears the "natural name" of Agon-goro, pronounced Agongro, or Agonglo: the derivation is Agon, the Palmyra tree, which is never lightning-struck, and whose leaves are therefore used for fetish, and Goro, cannot be beaten, *i. e.*, by thunder. His strong names are: 1. Thunder never misses the tree it aims at. 2. A hungry man never eats earth, but only food; so the surrounding people, being his food, he will not leave them. 3. All nations must sit down, and not attempt to attack Dahome.	1789.	Agongoro, the son of Sin-men-kpen, had three rivals, two of them his own uncles, but he soon won the day. He began well, reducing the intolerable imposts, enlisting his tax gatherers, and visiting his Mingan—a mark of extreme condescension. Nor was he less pious: on his first visit to his sire's tomb, he was accompanied by forty-eight men, who were slain from time to time, that he might "walk in blood all the way from Kana to Agbome, to see his father." He determined to follow in the path of Tegbwesun, and to repress the seraglio disorders, which had disgraced the last reign; and finally he "cautioned all to avoid getting into scrapes with him, since, if they did, they would be sure to repent of it, for he knew nobody, nor was he inclined to make any new acquaintances." In 1790, Agongoro attacked Baigee (Gbweji, a place in Makhi), the result being the death

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
7.	The History calls him "Wheenoohew" (Weenohoo, according to Commander Forbes), a name completely unintelligible to the people. It also mentions a title, Se-do-zaw, "Wherever I rub, I leave my scent." The mother of this king was called Senume.	1789.	of the Gau, by sickness, and a few victims for the paternal grave. He shed tears when told that the King of Allada had made a feast to celebrate his father's death, but on account of the Oyos he dared not attack that injurious prince. The army was again sent against the Makhis, under a new Gau, who, failing, was ordered to attack the Whydahs. A third unsuccessful expedition threatened a famine, and Agongoro is known in history as one of the most unfortunate of Dahoman monarchs. Presently, 300 prisoners, and afterwards 170 Makhi captives, were brought in to fill Sin-men-kpen's grave, and a Makhi country near Iketu supplied 1000 victims for the approaching Grand Customs, which take place only after the death of a King. M. Gourg, the French Governor at Why-

dah, presently made himself obnoxious. He was seized, bound, and exposed on the beach, till a canoe could be found to carry him through the heavy surf. He died on board the ship Rouen, *en route* towards Cape François. In Jan., Feb., and March, 1791, took place the Grand Customs, at the capital. Captain Fayrer and Mr. Hogg, Governor of Apollonia, were present, and both affirm that not less than 500 men, women, and children, were victimized. Dr. M'Leod's Voyage to Africa so confuses dates and documents between 1803, the year of his visiting Dahome, and 1820, that it is impossible to make out from his pages the date of Agongoro's demise. He says, "an instance of this sort (*i.e.*, setting aside the eldest son and heir) occurred, however, at the demise of the late King, Whenoohew (Agongoro), when the eldest son's right of primo-			

Order.	NAMES.	Date of Accession.	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
7.		1789.	geniture was disallowed, because one of his toes, from some accident, overlapped the other (Commander Forbes calls it a club-foot); and his next brother, the present King, who, with respect to form, is certainly 'a marvellous proper man,' was elected in his stead." This seems to point to King Gezo, but as I have stated, Dr. M'Leod, though repeatedly alluding to the reigning monarch, never quotes his name. Captain John Adams (Remarks on the Country from Cape Palmas to the River Congo: Whittaker & Co., London, 1823) leaves us in equal ignorance, perhaps for the same reason, viz., that he did not know it himself.
8.	Gezo, the father of the ruling King, derived his natural name from the	1818.	Gaze, being a man with a peaceful character, and afflicted with gibbosity, yielded his throne to a younger brother, Gezo, who therefore was

	initial word of a phrase, Gezo emasigbe, meaning Ge (a kind of red bird, whose feathers fire will not burn), zo (fire, fiery, red), e (he), mási (is not afraid), gbe (of bush). His strong names are: 1. A charm that nothing in the world can withstand. 2. Having killed the surrounding enemies, the rest come to beg. 3. A leper is not embraced: he is like a person with such sickness that no nation will touch him. Some resident Europeans believe that Atinglí is also a royal name: it belonged to one of his headmen, and was also the		not, as Commander Forbes stated (Chapter I.), a usurper, and died in July 24, 1861. Another brother, Adanzan, raised, as is customary, a mutiny: he was put down, and still, I believe, survives, a state prisoner. According to Commander Forbes, Gezo behaved treacherously to Achade, chief of the Republic of Jena (whom others call chief of Leflefu). On the death of Onsi, King of Jena, the heir-apparent, Dekon, being turned out, applied for aid to Dahome. Gezo, who had just got rid of his brother, Adanzan, marched upon the town, which had become a Republic, with Achade as president. The Dahoman army was repulsed during three several years, for Gezo, unlike his son, had only an annual slave hunt. Gezo then made peace, and swore eternal friendship with his gallant foe, who was invited to be present at the Dahoman Customs, hostages being sent to him. After two years, Achade,

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
8.	beginning of a phrase, *e.g.*, Atingli (a sharply cut stump), do (in the ground), kuno (does not), sinden (fear aught). Agontime was the mother of Gezo.	1818.	neglecting all precautions, went to Agbome with nearly 1000 traders. During the platform sacrifice, he was suddenly seized, thrown, and beheaded, his cranium being placed in a copper casing. Dekon, invited to Jena, went there, and was beheaded. The town was destroyed by the next annual slave hunt, and the survivors fled to Abeokuta. Finding the enemies of his race, the Oyos, in trouble with the Fulas and Hausas, who, in 1825, destroyed Katunga, their capital, Gezo attacked them at Kana, and completely subdued them. The tribute was abolished, and most of the Oyos were enlisted into the King's service. Gezo then pretended to attack Ashante, and in testimony of his conquest built the Komasi Palace. After many minor successes, the warlike King attacked, in 1840, the Attakpamwe, a

people living to the west of Dahome: all except 400 men fled: these defended themselves bravely, but were soon overpowered by the Amazons. The latter was a favourite arm with Gezo, who often boasted that he had first organised it. It raised him high amongst the surrounding kings and chiefs, who declared an alliance with each other, and a determination to make a distaff of Gezo's head—a declaration equivalent to a *casus belli*. About 1839 he attacked the Makhis, and broke, it is said, 126 towns. Next year he fell upon the Nagos, who had ravaged his frontier, and signally punished them.

In 1842, the King was visited by a coloured Wesleyan missionary, Rev. T. B. Freeman, who reported highly of Agbome and its contents.

During the life of Shodeke, chief of Abeokuta, there was friendship between the Dahoman and the Egba. When Sagbwa

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
8.		1818.	succeeded him, quarrels began—an Amazon corps was defeated at Ado, a frontier town, and lost its officers and umbrella. Gezo swore revenge. In 1848, a chief named Olikiki induced the King to attack Okeadon, some thirty miles north-west of Badagry. Gezo pretended to march on Abeokuta, fell back in the night, and was introduced by the traitor into the city. It is said that 20,000 Otas were seized and sold : there was no resistance : the sick and aged were slain, and many fugitives were drowned in the rapid river. In October, 1849, Gezo was visited by the late Commander Forbes and Mr. Vice-Consul Duncan, who had travelled through the country in 1845-46. They were received at Agbome, with the usual ceremonies, by the King, who showed them the wooden model of

				a hill in the Makhi country, called Kenglo, which Commander Forbes writes "Kangaroo." It was a strongly fortified site, and Mr. Duncan had previously complained to the King of having been insulted there. The place had been taken by the Amazons, and its very stones carried to Agbome (Chapter XVIII.). On October 29, 1847, Commander Forbes sailed for Sierra Leone, and Mr. Duncan died on board H.M.S. Kingfisher. On May 14, 1851, Commander Forbes, accompanying the late Mr. Beecroft, H.M.'s Consul for the Bights, again landed, and proceeded to witness the Customs of Agbome. Their object was to estimate the King's expenses, to offer him a compensation for abandoning the slave trade, and to dissuade Gezo from attacking Abeokuta. It is needless to say that they failed, and retired with scanty good will on both sides. On March 3, 1851, Gezo attacked Abeo-

Order.	NAMES.	Date of Accession	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
8.		1818.	kuta with 10,000 to 16,000 troops, men and women, the flower of his army. He was opposed by Ogubonna, the Egba Commander-in-chief, and after a hot contest, was beaten back, losing, chiefly during the flight, by a moderate computation, 1,200 of his best fighters. He never recovered this blow. In 1852, Gezo signed a treaty for the suppression of the slave trade, which was so much waste paper. He then turned towards the French interest, and was twice visited by M. Wallon, Lieutenant de Vaisseau, who escorted a present of two howitzers from the French Government, and carried with him two youths from the palace for education in France. In 1858, Gezo died, after a reign of 40 years, from the effects of a virulent small-pox, leaving behind him a great name as a warrior and a king. He had greatly reduced human

			sacrifice, and had made his principal officers take the fetish oath to prevent the general massacre of women in the palace.
9.	The natural name is Gelele, which begins a sentence: Gelele má nyonzi—"Bigness, with no way of lifting." Mr. T. B. Freeman erroneously states it Glere, or Glery, the jawbone. His strong names are: 1. Tenge makanfenkpon: A rock, the finger-nail cannot scratch it—behold! 2. Kini kini kini: Lion of lions. 3. An animal having cut its teeth, evil has entered into the bush (the bush meaning the surrounding tribes, who	1858.	Gelele succeeded his father at the age of 38, to the exclusion of his eldest brother, "Godó," who was and is much addicted to drink. Other brothers gave him trouble, though he was expressly nominated for succession by Gezo, after the fashion at Abeokuta. For the first two years he contented himself with warring down small chiefs, who are mentioned in Chapter IX. Of these he has killed about forty. In July and August, 1860, the King performed the Grand Customs for his father, slaying, it is supposed, 2000 men, which number may readily be reduced to 500. He destroyed Attako (Taccou), and slew Akia'on (Chapter IX.). Early in 1861, Gelele collected a large force

ORDER.	NAMES.	DATE OF ACCESSION	VARIOUS EXPLOITS, ETC.
9.	feel the sharpness of Dahome's tooth). 4. Ye mabu lo sin men: Shadow is never lost in water. The King's mother, who still lives, is called Zoindi.	1858.	to attack Abeokuta: small-pox broke out on the road, and he was compelled to return. On March 15th, 1862, the King fell suddenly, with 6000 men, upon Ishagga, a town containing about 5000 souls. It had behaved with consummate treachery to his father. He slew the chief, and carried off seventeen or eighteen native Christian converts and a Scripture reader—Mr. William Doherty, of Sierra Leone, and Mr. William Jones, with five men and three women, who were paraded to Whydah, and afterwards reported slain. About this point, however, there are many doubts. Mr. Doherty is said to have been crucified, with a nail passed through his head into a tree trunk, and holding an open umbrella *honoris causâ*. It is supposed that their death was hastened by the earthquake of July 10, which the King thought was the

			voice of his father calling for more victims. On March 15, 1863, Gelele attacked Igbara, a small Egbado town, and completely destroyed it, carrying off many captives. In December and January, 1862-63, the King was visited by Captain Wilmot, R.N., senior officer on the West Coast of Africa, Captain Luce, R.N., and Dr. Haran, H.M.S. Brisk, attended by the Rev. Peter W. Bernasko, native assistant missionary, Whydah. The officers were most courteously received, but effected nothing. In June, 1863, Gelele marched into the Makhi country with all his army, and after a short campaign, returned back, bearing a few captives. On March 15, 1864, the King attacked Abeokuta, and after a very poor affair, received an exemplary defeat (conclusion of my narrative), which will probably lead to the ruin of Dahome.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library

1 1012 01101 4133

DATE DUE

[redacted]			
JAN 3 1 2005			

Demco, Inc. 38-293

8